

Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture

Edited by
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

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Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies

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with the collaboration of
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Introduction

Albrecht Classen
(The University of Arizona, Tucson)

Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: A Significant Domain Ignored For Too Long by Modern Research?

1. Critical Inquiry: The Relevance of Rural Space

Cultural and literary historians face a curious problem in approaching their period of investigations, which they are often rather ignorant of, since we are facing a kind of filter through which we receive the data allowing us to understand the past. A vast majority of texts, images, sculptures, buildings, musical compositions, and art works were produced for and by members of the aristocracy and the clergy, although they constituted at most only five percent of the entire population. This changed quite a bit by the late Middle Ages when the world of urban centers gained tremendously in influence, but city dwellers tended very much to imitate aristocratic culture, that is, they acculturated themselves to the world of the courts, though they certainly pursued their own political, economic, and ideological interests. Tournaments were held in late-medieval cities, bankers bought castles from impoverished nobles and restored them to their previous glory, and then lived in those aristocratic spaces trying hard to copy the traditional values and ideals for their own purposes—see, for instance, Castle Runkelstein outside of Bozen in South Tyrol, today northern Italy.¹

¹ Helmut Stampfer, “Das Bild des Adels in der Tiroler Wandmalerei zur Zeit Oswalds von Wolkenstein,” *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Leben – Werk – Rezeption*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 109–19.

The origin of most medieval cities goes back at least to the eleventh century, and considering the survival of many ancient Roman cities into the Middle Ages, we can even point to continuous traditions spanning thousands of years. Premodern cities, as we thus should call them to pay attention to the ongoing history of medieval cities through the following centuries and then until today, previously overlooked, have by now attracted as much interest by modern scholars as the world of the courts and the medieval Church at large.²

By the same token, neither the rural population nor the village, neither rural space, including the forest, the pasture or meadow, the mountains, nor bodies of water ever seem to have aroused much interest, at least not until ca. 1800 in the wake of Romanticism, if we believe what the majority of research of the Middle Ages and the early modern age seems to indicate. However, and quite significantly, we can observe a considerable change in that regard and virtually on all fronts, both in the study of literature and the arts, and then also among scholars in the fields of premodern culture and history. Nevertheless, most recent contributions to this large and yet still mostly uncharted terrain content themselves with the discussion of 'environment in social, economic, agricultural, and technical terms.'³

As a consequence of the 'spatial turn' (see below), today we are probing much more than ever before the issue of rural space in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, and this both in theoretical and in philological, art-historical, philosophical, social-economic, and biological-scientific terms.⁴ We would be well

² See the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009). I have engaged with the rich history of scholarship on this topic in my introduction there. See also the contributions to *Städtische Räume im Mittelalter*, ed. Susanne Erisch and Jörg Oberste (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009).

³ The contributors to *Umwelt und Herrschaft in der Geschichte: Environnement et pouvoir: une approche historique*, ed. François Duceppe-Lamarre and Jens Ivo Engels. *Ateliers des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris*, 2 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2008), generally discuss what research has been carried out, but do not yet engage with the mental-historical and social-historical realities of rural space in the Middle Ages.

⁴ Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen: Raum und Zeit im höfischen Roman*. de Gruyter Studienbuch (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), discusses the philosophical approach to space in antiquity (Aristotle) and in the Middle Ages, 34–63, et passim, and then probes how medieval poets reflected their space modalities. She discounts, however, the awareness of rural space at that time too much, when she claims: "Eine Landkarte unter die Bewegungen des Helden zu legen macht nicht viel Sinn, denn die geographischen Namen sind ins Unwirkliche entrückt, in die Nachbarschaft von Avalon" (47; to utilize a map to trace the heroes' movements does not make much sense because the geographical names are removed into the sphere of the unreal, in the neighborhood of Avalon). From a generally structural point of view we could support Störmer-Caysa's perspectives, but there are many more dimensions in rural space than she might have imagined. This volume will try to counter-balance her approach, and that of many of her sources.

advised to pay heed to how Noel Castree defines space, who emphasizes that ‘the term place . . . derives its character, in part, from its willing or unwilling engagement with something ‘bigger’ or ‘wider’ than itself.”⁵ The context matters a lot, and hence the larger framework, especially with respect to the history of mentality. The present volume wants to push this issue further as much as possible and to set new standards at the same time, bringing to light a host of new critical dimensions in the exploration of medieval and early-modern history of mentality, art history, social history, and literary history.⁶

One fascinating, maybe at first unexpected yet highly illuminating, example of how complex the situation had been in terms of political structures and economic control, forcing us to conceive of space in a variety of approaches, would be the world of the Lombard plains in the Middle Ages. While traditionally art historians and urban historians have strongly suggested that the major changes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries transforming northern Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were primarily influenced by the rise of the bourgeois, merchant class, the opposite now seems to have been the case, at least there. Not that we would have to assume that the peasant population dominated in that region, but as it has become very clear by now, the Lombard plains were not simply controlled by rising cities dotting the landscape, but by the affluent and independent landed nobility.⁷

⁵ Noel Castree, “Differential Geographies: Place, Indigenous Rights and ‘Local Resources,” *Political Geography* 23 (Feb. 2004): 133–67; here 138 n. 7.

⁶ For some preliminary and foundational research, see Günther E. Thiery, “Natur/Umwelt: Antike” (641–48); Harry Kühnel, together with Peter Dinzelsbacher, “Natur/Umwelt: Mittelalter” (648–68); Rolf P. Sieferle, “Natur/Umwelt: Neuzeit” (668–80), *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte: Hauptthemen in Einzeldarstellungen*, ed. Peter Dinzelsbacher. 2nd revised and expanded edition. Kröners Taschenausgabe, 469 (1993; Stuttgart: Kröner, 2008). In light of my present understanding I would have certainly included the topic of ‘nature’ or ‘rural space’ in the *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. 3 vols. (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), but there were simply limitations even for that gargantuan reference work. The new project, *Handbook of Medieval Culture*, which I am also editing for De Gruyter at the moment, will include a number of entries on animals, fish, and birds, then on poor and rich, and finally on the rural world and peasants.

⁷ Carlo Bertelli, *Lombardia medievale: arte e architettura*. Con saggi di Maria Teresa Donat et al. (Milan: Skira, 2002); for a contrastive view, see now Areli Marina, “Magnificent Architecture in Late Medieval Italy,” *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics: Art, Architecture, Literature, Music*, ed. C. Stephen Jaeger. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 193–214; I will return to the topic addressed in her article later in this Introduction. It has, however, always been easier to turn one’s attention to city development, church buildings, the courts, and castles than to the rural community, the village, or the countryside because they do not speak as loudly as the other spaces. Nevertheless, recent research has begun to turn its attention even to the economic conditions in rural communities; see Hannes Obermair, and Volker Stamm, *Zur Ökonomie einer ländlichen Pfarrgemeinde im Spätmittelalter: Das Rechnungsbuch der Marienpfarrkirche Gries (Bozen) von 1422 bis 1440*. Veröffentlichungen des südtiroler Landesarchivs pubblicazioni dell’archivio provinciale di

As Nicolino Applauso observes in a personal comment to me: “A good example of this can be found in [the case of] the city of Massa Lombarda, near Bologna. I was there this summer and consulted the 1250 deed that ratified the boundaries for each cultivable site established for the 87 peasant families (and granted them considerable autonomy). Each family unit moved to undeveloped areas from the Lombard region. They were obviously professional cultivators because their communities flourished. In northern Italy numerous members from the peasant community are the ones who initially created what became later successful urban centers.”⁸ A similar case is also noticeable in the regions of Latium and Tuscany where rural settlements eventually became important urban centers like Cerveteri and Vulci.⁹ Fourteenth-century Florence, Siena, and other prominent Northern Italian *comuni* seem to have forgotten their peasant origins when they wrote their respective chronicles, boasting their Roman aristocratic ancestry (see the Chronicle by Villani, and Dante as well).¹⁰

We can now also add the presence of a number of significant rural towns and other settlements (*civitates*) that enjoyed considerable influence even on the Lombard League and were treated as independent entities worthy of public respect. But in the course of time the major cities such as Milan captured the absolute hegemony over their entire territory surrounding them, which made the small rural towns mostly disappear from the records by the end of the twelfth century.¹¹

Bolzano (Bozen: Athesiadruck, 2011).

⁸ Applauso in an email to Albrecht Classen, October 2011. See Mario Tabanelli, *Questa è la Massa: Storia e cronache della Massa dei Lombardi dalle origini al 1578*. Memorie di Romagna (Faenza: Fratelli Lega, 1972).

⁹ Mauro Cristofani, *The Etruscans: A New Investigation*, trans. Brian Phillips (New York: Galahad Books, 1979). Mauro Cristofani explains the transition from rural settlements to residential centers in the southern Etruscan territory by evoking Plato's *Laws* (III, 680–81) and proposing that in ninth century B.C. “groups of men came down from the mountains and settled in the country-side below, erecting wooden fenced as a protection against wild animals and building a large communal dwelling” (17). More information on the rural origin of Tuscany can be also found in *Etruria, Tuscia, Toscana: L'identità di una regione attraverso i secoli*, ed. Michele Luzzati. Vol. 1. (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1992.).

¹⁰ Giovanni Villani, “Cronica di Giovanni Villani.” *Croniche di Giovanni, Matteo e Filippo Villani secondo le migliori stampe e corredate di note filologiche e storiche: testo di lingua*. Vol. 1. (Trieste: Tipografia del Liody Austriaco, 1857), 7–597. This information dates from several personal emails (Dec. 3 and 13, 2011) and is based on his own findings as reflected in his contribution to this volume. I appreciate his valuable comment. Applauso himself refers to Corrado Barberis, “I caratteri originari del mondo rurale italiano,” *Trasformazioni delle società rurali nei paesi dell'Europa occidentale e mediterranea (secoli XIX–XX): Bilancio degli studi e prospettive di ricerca*, ed. Pasquale Villani. Guida ricerca: storia (Naples: Guida, 1986), 269–88.

¹¹ Gianluca Raccagni, *The Lombard League 1167–1125* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 65–67.

Not surprisingly, apart from the growth of many new urban centers the rural development also becomes a major factor during the twelfth century, which modern research has tended to ignore for much too long in favor of its sometimes almost exclusive focus on the excitement which fourteenth- and fifteenth-century urban culture in Italy, commonly identified with the Renaissance, exerts until today.¹²

In other words, the true power structures throughout the Middle Ages and in the early modern age, and hence also the perception of and dealing with space, always depended on specific local conditions, even though feudalism was the paradigmatic concept determining most European countries, with the notable exception of Iceland and Switzerland, to some extent.¹³ In Iceland, for instance, no one individual, or one family has ever had sufficient power to control the entire island, but soon enough in the tenth century a group of ca. thirty-six chieftaincies, *goðorð*, emerged, each headed by one or more chieftain, *goðar*. Only in the twelfth century did a more centralized government form, predicated on *Ríki*, a territorial lordship, and hence a type of aristocracy, which from then on increasingly accumulated power in its own hands. Things then changed quite radically in the thirteenth century when the Norwegian king managed to intervene and to assume a central position in Icelandic politics, which found its most vivid expression in Iceland swearing to the Norwegian king their loyalty, and pledging to become a tributary country. In fact, the chieftains became the king's men and carried out his orders.¹⁴

A similarly complex historical development can be observed in Switzerland where the rural population has always enjoyed strong respect,¹⁵ and we can

¹² Luisa Chiappa Mauri, *Contado e città in dialogo: comuni urbani e comunità rurali nella Lombardia medievale*. Quaderni di Acme / Università degli studi di Milano, Facoltà di lettere e filosofia, 62 (Milan: Cisalpino, 2003); see also the contribution to this volume by Kathryn L. Jasper.

¹³ See, for instance, Guy P. Marchal, *Sempach 1386: Von den Anfängen des Territorialstaates Luzern: Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte des Kanton Luzern*. Mit einer Studie von Waltraud Hörsch, "Adel im Bannkreis Österreichs" (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1986); Mattias Weishaupt, *Bauern, Hirten und "frume edle puren": Bauern- und Bauernstaatsideologie in der spätmittelalterlichen Eidgenossenschaft und der nationalen Geschichtsschreibung der Schweiz*. Kulturelle Vielfalt und nationale Identität, Nationales Forschungsprogramm, 21 (Basel and Frankfurt a. M.: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1992); Dieter Fahrni, *Schweizer Geschichte: Ein historischer Abriss von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. 5th ed. (1982; Zürich: Pro Helvetia, 1991); T. K. Derry, *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979); Jesse L Byock, *Viking Age Iceland* (London: Penguin, 2001).

¹⁴ For further details, see Magnús Stefánsson, "Iceland," *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), 311–19, with an extensive bibliography.

¹⁵ Walter Drack, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Schweiz*. 3 vols. ([Einsiedeln] Benziger, 1958–1999); Martin Kistler, *Einung und Eidgenossenschaft: die Verfassung der vorderösterreichischen Grafschaft Hauenstein im Vergleich mit der Entwicklung und den Verfassungen der Gründungsorte der Eidgenossenschaft*. Basler

certainly find other regions in medieval Europe where the rise of the aristocracy was not so rapid as in Germany, France, or England, and where the rural population continued to enjoy considerable influence over the centuries.¹⁶

While 'rural space' constitutes one particular aspect, Medieval and Early Modern Studies have recently recognized that 'environment' at large constitutes a significant component and deserves much more attention than in the past. However, despite some preliminary investigations, and disregarding a good number of critical studies focused on spatial aspects dealing with 'environment' *avant la lettre*, the rural world as perceived and interacted with in the premodern world still awaits its comprehensive examination. This volume hopes to lay more of the necessary foundations and to shed light on a vast variety of relevant aspects, focusing, above all, on the rural in specific contrast to the urban.¹⁷

In light of that observation, keeping especially cultural-historical documents in mind reflecting on social-economic conditions, we are immediately alerted to the curious but most significant phenomenon that we cannot simply focus on the

Studien zur Rechtswissenschaft, B74 (Basel, Munich, et al.: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 2006); see also the contributions to *Die Bauern in der Geschichte der Schweiz*, ed. Albert Tanner and Anne-Lise Head-König. Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, 10 (Basel: Chronos, 1992).

¹⁶ Michael Toch, *Peasants and Jews in Medieval Germany: Studies in Cultural, Social, and Economic History*. Collected Studies (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003). For a global overview, see *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, general editors M. M. Postan and H. J. Habakkuk. 2nd ed. 8vols. Since vol. VII, D. C. Coleman was co-editor (1941–1952; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966–1989). Here cannot be the space to engage with the virtually endless spectrum of agrarian history in the Middle Ages. After all, each region in medieval and early modern Europe underwent different developments, depending on social, economic, political, climatic, and so also religious and ideological conditions. In some areas slavery continued for a long time, far into the Middle Ages, in others serfdom quickly proved to be less efficient, while feudal contracts could serve the overarching purposes much better. Vol. 1 of the *Cambridge Economic History* (1941 [see note 16]) covers, for instance, the following topics: the settlement and colonization of Europe (Richard Koeber), agriculture and rural life in the later Roman Empire (Courtenay Edward Stevens), the evolution of agricultural technology (Charles Parain), agrarian institutions of the Germanic kingdoms from the fifth to the ninth century (Alfons Dopsch), agrarian conditions in the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages (Georg Ostrogorsky), the rise of dependent cultivation and seigniorial institutions (Marc Bloch), Medieval agrarian society in its prime: France (François Louis Ganshof), Italy (Gunnar Mickwith), Spain (Robert S. Smith), the lands east of the Elbe and German colonization eastwards (Hermann Aubin), Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary (Jan Rutkowski), Russia (Peter Struve), England (Nellie Neilson), Scandinavia (Store Bolin), and medieval agrarian society in transition (Hans Nabholz).

¹⁷ For a recent survey of environmental aspects, see Gerrit Jasper Schenk, "Der Mensch zwischen Natur und Kultur: Auf der Suche nach einer Umweltgeschichtsschreibung in der deutschsprachigen Mediävistik – eine Skizze," *Umwelt und Herrschaft in der Geschichte* (see note 3), 27–51. Urban space as an entity by itself remains excluded here because we have worked on this topic already in the volume *Urban Space* (see note 2).

courtly world alone, or be content with studying late-medieval and early-modern courts and cities as the all-commanding centers of cultural and economic activities. To emphasize the complexity of medieval and early-modern social conditions would be tantamount to carrying coals to Newcastle. Nevertheless, literary historians, art historians, social and economic historians have not yet talked to each other thoroughly enough, and the topic of 'rural space' truly invites cross-disciplinary investigations. To be sure, space itself has been recognized as a very important category in assessing medieval and early-modern literature, the arts, chronicles, and maps, among other media and genres. But the dominant approach continues to be to favor space where knights operate, architectural, interior space, or topical images of space in love poetry, for instance.¹⁸

As much as medieval and early-modern aristocracy and clergy made greatest efforts to dominate all fields of communication, art works, philosophy, religion, politics, and architecture, we would fool ourselves if we simply accepted those strong impressions. After all, the vast majority of premodern societies lived in the countryside. Everyone depended on the rural world for foodstuff, and no individual can exist without the natural environment. Plants, birds, animal, and fish are all integral elements of the larger context of humanity, hence the great need to approach the Middle Ages and the early modern age from this perspective as well. Although countless numbers of modern philosophers, such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl or Ritter repeatedly emphasized that the discovery of nature constituted the (Italian) Renaissance, the medieval evidence does not really support such a view, although we still have to develop more precise analytic instruments and perspectives to identify what landscape or the agricultural world meant for people during the Middle Ages.

The present volume intends to be a companion piece to our previous book publication, *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age* (2009), and

¹⁸ See now the contributions to *Projektion – Reflexion – Ferne: Räumliche Vorstellungen und Denkfiguren im Mittelalter*, ed. Sonja Glauch, Susanne Köbele, and Uta Störmer-Caysa (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011). The central focus rests on space traversed by or inhabited by courtly knights, such as Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance (see the contribution by Karl Bertau), or on topical sceneries in courtly love poetry (see the contribution by Katharina Philipowski). Otherwise, the usual interest in 'classical' cities such as Jerusalem (Ingrid Baumgärtner) or Nuremberg (Horst Brunner) dominate the collection of studies. As far as rural space is concerned, there are no noteworthy efforts to explore new themes and concepts; instead we learn, once again, about the topical scene of the *locus amoenus* (Dorothea Klein) or of the relevance of roads or paths which the courtly protagonists choose (Elisabeth Schmid). Similarly, Burghart Wachinger revisits the same topic, the correlation of nature scenes and erotic love poetry in his article "Natur und Eros im mittelalterlichen Lied," id., *Lieder und Liederbücher. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik* (Berlin und New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 67–95. However, he rightly emphasizes that Oswald von Wolkenstein's use of nature images proves to somewhat unusual and creative, especially his references to birds and mushrooms in order to emphasize the erotic component (93–95).

both books together will set, we hope, the record straight and allow the multitude of other voices, images, concepts, material objects, and ideas that determined the world outside of the court and the church come to the foreground as well. Significantly, we join a growing number of researchers who have challenged the traditional approaches and have increasingly argued that rural space, that is nature in the broadest sense of the word, was treated with considerable respect, curiosity, and interest, and this already in the premodern world.¹⁹

The present Introduction tries to create a broad platform, from which then the subsequent collection of critical, scholarly articles can be launched. Our intent was to be as interdisciplinary as possible, but there are always limits to such goals. I admit that we have given literary history perhaps more weight than desirable, but there will be enough alternative fields of investigation that are considered here to create a truly kaleidoscopic scenario of rural space in its myriad of meanings. I would have liked to see contributions by music historians, economic historians, and archeologists, not to mention historians of philosophy, for instance, but the present anthology is the best we could assemble, based on our long-term and intensive outreach efforts, calls for papers, and international search for significant collaborators for the present project. Rural space proves to be an ideal topic for interdisciplinary research and alerts us to numerous perspectives regarding the premodern world that have not yet been discussed sufficiently enough. Pursuing that approach we will also have to take into consideration fundamental questions of epistemological perceptions, attitudes, and hence mentality at large.²⁰

To be sure, rural space encompasses many different aspects, including the rural population as such, the village, the farm, farm animals, agricultural activities, including plowing, sowing, and harvesting, then the various rural spaces, such as the pasture, the forest, the body of water, and the mountain.²¹ We will have to consider both the interactions among the peasants, as presented in sermons, hagiographical texts, literary documents, art works, chronicles, and law books, and the relationship between peasants and the members of the upper classes in much greater detail, but we can also rely on much extensive research on this topic, such

¹⁹ For theoretical reflections on this topic, see Jens Pfeiffer, "'Landschaft' im Mittelalter? oder Warum die Landschaft angeblich der Moderne gehört," *'Landschaft im Mittelalter? – Augenschein und Literatur*, ed. id. *Das Mittelalter* 14 (2011): 11–30; see also his bibliography on this topic, *ibid.*, 3–4.

²⁰ For modern perspectives of a highly interdisciplinary kind, probing how human beings perceive space in the first place, and how cartography assists us in that process, see Volker Kaminske, *Die räumliche Wahrnehmung: Grundlage für Geographie und Kartographie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011); see also Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich and Vienna: Hanser, 2003).

²¹ Liana Vardi, "Imagining the Harvest in Early Modern Europe," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1356–97.

as the conference proceedings from a scholarly meeting at the University of Bremen in February 2004.²²

Moreover, rural space also exists outside and independent of society; hence we will have to study carefully how individual writers, artists, or philosophers reflected on the forest, rivers and oceans, natural phenomena, flowers, birds, reptiles, and all kinds of animals. Albertus Magnus (1193/1206–1280), for instance, dedicated much attention to the careful analysis and description of the natural world, when he composed his famous treatise *De animalibus libri XXVI* in the 1260s, based on Michael Scot's rendering of Aristotle's natural treatises into Latin in the 1220s.²³ Sometimes it will be important to trace how learned authors discuss nature in its idyllic, topical appearance; and sometimes we will have to pay close attention to the ways in which artists have represented nature, either in the form of a garden or as wild and undomesticated space.²⁴ Rural space can also be regarded as the contained hunting ground, the park, and the garden, depending on how we want to emphasize this contrastive concept specifically opposed to the urban and the courtly space. Ultimately, the study of rural space offers many opportunities to develop innovative epistemological strategies and contributes to the ever widening perspective pursued in Medieval Studies and Early Modern Studies.

2. Natural Space and the Medieval Encyclopedia

If we refer, for instance, to the presentation of animals in medieval and early modern sculptures, paintings, and carvings, we would have to admit immediately how much rural space occupied medieval minds. Much depends, of course, on the investigative lens, the special focus, and the research interest, not to forget the primary objects of investigation. Insofar as nature was the book written by God, according to medieval ideas, based on "Psalm 148 and the song glorifying the Creation in Daniel 3," the learned and the religious person only needed to turn

²² *Tätigkeitsfelder und Erfahrungshorizonte des ländlichen Menschen in der frühmittelalterlichen Grundherrschaft (bis ca. 1000): Festschrift für Dieter Hägermann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Brigitte Kasten. Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beiheft, 184 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006). The essays are grouped according to four major themes: 1. people in their space; 2. the working people in the secular sphere; 3. working people in the ecclesiastical sphere; and 4. people and their tools and instruments.

²³ Albert the Great, *Man and the Beasts: De animalibus* (Books 22–26), trans. James J. Scanlan. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 47 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1987), 12–14.

²⁴ I will address this several times here in the Introduction and then in one of my own contributions.

his/her eyes toward the natural environment to grasp the meaning of the divine messages.²⁵

Every aspect in nature provided epistemological riddles and promises at the same time. Fruit and plants, grass and herbs, bushes and shrubs, flowers and trees all carried a meaning, which made, indeed, rural space into a veritable lexicon of God's creation.²⁶ 'Scientists' such as Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Konrad of Megenberg (1309–1374) produced extensive research on the medicinal effects and religious symbolism of plants,²⁷ which was admittedly not yet at par with such voluminous and detailed compendia on plants written in the Renaissance, such as Leonhart Fuchs's famous *De historia stirpium commentarii insignes* from 1542.²⁸ However, it was certainly the result of thorough and practical investigations. We would do injustice to medieval intellectuals and practitioners if we claimed that they had little or no trustworthy understanding of the wide range of plants and herbs, and subsequently of the medicinal drugs extracted from them.²⁹ In other words, natural scientists also had much to say about the rural environment, as the many beautifully illustrated medieval manuscripts of Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis* confirm, especially those from the fifteenth century.³⁰ The reader could

²⁵ Werner Telesko, *The Wisdom of Nature: The Healing Powers and Symbolism of Plants and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Munich, London, and New York: Prestel, 2001), 7.

²⁶ Celia Fisher, *The Medieval Flower Book* (London: The British Library, 2007).

²⁷ Helmut Birkhan, *Pflanzen im Mittelalter: Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2012). I was, however, not able to consult this new study since it was not yet in print when I completed this Introduction.

²⁸ Frederick G. Meyer, Emily Emmart Trueblood, and John L. Heller, *The Great Herbal of Leonhart Fuchs: De historia stirpium commentarii insignes, 1542 (Notable Commentaries on the History of Plants)*. Foreword by Joseph Ewan. 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

²⁹ Meyer, Trueblood, and Heller, *The Great Herbal* (see note 28), vol. I, 7–8. The modern perspective pursued here blinds the authors to some extent regarding the actual achievements by medieval herbalists. For them, "[f]rom the early Middle Ages to almost the end of the fifteenth century, herbalistic-medical literature was essentially a mix of local folk practices and bits and pieces of genuine Dioscoridean tradition, held together, so to speak, by material derived from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* and tracts attributed to Hippocrates and Galen. The corpus of late medieval herbalistic-medical literature, in both Latin and the vernacular, bore little resemblance to Dioscorides' work, although it indirectly derived from it." (I, 7). But then they only mention names such as Constantine the African, Matthaeus Platearius of Salerno, and Pietro d'Abano, subsequently immediately switching to Islamic writers. They do not even mention Hildegard of Bingen, Petrus de Crescentiis, Master Richard, Gottfried of Franken, or Wilhelm of Hirnkofen; cf. Bernhard Dietrich Haage and Wolfgang Wegner, together with Gundolf Keil and Helga Haage-Naber, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Grundlagen der Germanistik, 43 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007), 147–50. See also Wilfrid Blunt and Sandra Raphael, *The Illustrated Herbal* (London: Frances Lincoln Publishers Limited, distributed by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, [1979]); Minta Collins, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Traditions*. The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London: The British Library; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

³⁰ Joyce Irene Whalley, *Pliny the Elder: Historia naturalis* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982).

glean much information about mammals, wild and domesticated, aquatic species, birds, insects, trees, vines and the variety of wines, olives, fruit trees, the various crops, flax, herbs and medicinal plants, metals, stones, gems, and a variety of other objects or living creatures. We also would have to refer to the extensive biological and pharmaceutical research carried out by Islamic scholars, especially in Andalusia, Spain, such as Al-Biruni (d. 1048), Al-Gafiqi (twelfth century), and Ibn Al-Baytar (d. 1248).³¹

In the *Physiologus* we read, for instance, "There is an animal called the elephant whose copulating is free from wicked desire. The tragelaphus, however, is a different animal. If the elephant wishes to produce young, he goes off to the east near paradise where there is a tree called the mandrake. And he goes there with his mate, who first takes a part of the tree and gives it to her husband and cajoles him until he eats it."³² Another excellent example pertains to the stag: "The stag is an enemy of the dragon. Moreover, the dragon flees from the stag into the cracks in the earth, and the stag, going and drinking from a stream until his muzzle is full, then spits out the water into the cracks and draws the dragon out and stamps on him and kills him" (No. XLV, 58). The religious metaphorical language, equating the stag with Christ and the dragon with the devil, is self-manifest. The author demonstrates interest in nature only insofar as it helps him to explicate the divine message of the New Testament. Nevertheless, we still recognize the tremendous interest in the elements that make up rural space, whether animals or birds, trees or bushes. Everything created speaks to the religious author and his countless translators and adaptators. Indeed, Christianity would not be the same without its full acknowledgment of how much nature mattered for human life.

Throughout the Middle Ages individual authors, having learned much from this enormous popular treatise *Physiologus* and then Isidor of Seville's *Etymologiae*, came forward with important treatises on agriculture, gardening, and the proper managing of farms. Some of the most important names were Petrus de Crescentiis (b. ca. 1230/1233), Meister Richard (early fourteenth century), Gottfried of Franken (b. late thirteenth century), Wilhelm of Hirnhofen (fl. late fifteenth century), and

³¹ Eleonora di Vincenzo, *Kitab al-'adwiya al-mufrada di 'Abu Ga'far 'Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Ahmad b. Sayyid Al-Gafiqi (Xii sec.): Edizione del capitolo 'Alif con indici e apparato critico in nota*. Supplemento No. 1 alla *Rivista degli studi orientali*, nuova serie, LXXXI (Pisa and Rome: Fabrizio serra editore, 2009). See the excellent review by Adam C. McCollum, with additional bibliography, in *The Medieval Review* 12.01.13 (online).

³² *Physiologus*, trans. by Michael J. Curley (1979; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), No. XX, 29. For an excellent introduction to this texts, see Valentine Anthony Pakis, "Contextual Duplicity and Textual Variation: The Siren and Onocentaur in the *Physiologus* Tradition," *Mediaevistik* 23 (2011), forthcoming.

Nikolaus Engelmann (fl. early sixteenth century).³³ Then we find numerous books on hunting, on animals, and on forestry—all of fundamental importance for medieval and early modern society.³⁴

Animals, above all, attracted medieval artists' and writers' attention since they served exceedingly well in heraldry, in moralizing sculptures, as representatives of virtues and vices, of evil incarnate and the good itself, and as symbols of a multiplicity of various aspects in human life.³⁵ In fact, the relationship between man and nature might have been much closer in the premodern world than today, which would underscore even further the utmost importance of studying rural space in much greater detail.

All these aspects were ultimately embraced by the medieval encyclopedia writers, such as Albertus Magnus (1193/1206–1280),³⁶ Honorius Augustodunensis (d. ca. 1150),³⁷ Herrad of Hohenberg and her fellow sisters (*Hortus deliciarum*, second half of the twelfth century),³⁸ Vincent of Beauvais (ca. 1190–1264), Thomas Cantimpratensis (1201–1263/172),³⁹ Bartholomew the Englishman (also known as Bartholomaeus Anglicus, fl. 1231),⁴⁰ Alexander Neckam (1157–1217),⁴¹ or Konrad

³³ Bernhard Dietrich Haage and Wolfgang Wegner, together with Gundolf Keil and Helga Haage-Naber, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Grundlagen der Germanistik, 43 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2007), 147–50 (Wegner).

³⁴ *Deutsche Fachliteratur* (see note 33), 166–77 (Wegner). A number of the contributors to the present volume critically engage with hunting itself, the art of hunting, hunting parks, and hunting animals; see Abigail P. Dowling, Marilyn L. Sandidge, Maria Cecilia Ruiz, and Jacqueline Stuhmiller. I will return to this issue in greater detail further down.

³⁵ F. D. Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages*, ed. Evelyn Antal and John Harthan (Cambridge, MA: M. I. T. Press [1971]); Janetta Rebold Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in the Art of the Middle Ages* (New York, London, and Paris: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1992).

³⁶ Albert the Great, *Man and the Beasts* (*De animalibus*, books 22–26) (see note 23).

³⁷ Dagmar Gottschall, *Das 'Elucidarium' des Honorius Augustodunensis: Untersuchungen zu seiner Überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte im deutschsprachigen Raum mit Ausgabe der niederdeutschen Übersetzung*. Texte und Textgeschichte, 33 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1992). For the history of reception of Augustodunensis's work, see Ernstpeter Ruhe, *Elucidarium und Lucidaires: zur Rezeption des Werks von Honorius Augustodunensis in der Romania und in England*. Wissenskulturliteratur im Mittelalter, 7 (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1993).

³⁸ Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

³⁹ Tomás de Cantimpré, *De natura rerum* (lib. IV–XII). Edición facsímil, dirigida por Luis García Ballester. Biblioteca Universitaria de Granada. Manuscript. C–67 (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1973?–1974).

⁴⁰ M. C. Seymour and his Colleagues, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and His Encyclopedia* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1992); Heinz Meyer, *Die Enzyklopädie des Bartholomäus Anglicus: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von 'De proprietatibus rerum'*. Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 77 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2000), identifies the following areas as central to Bartholomaeus's scholarly interest: a. theology and philosophy; b. medicine; c. astronomy and astrology; d. geography; e. lapidary sciences; f. plants;

of Megenberg (1309–1374).⁴² These in turn spurred a whole flood of future scholars who accepted the challenges and made ever greater efforts to collect any possible aspect about the natural, or rural world and to summarize all those details in their voluminous tomes and to engage, at least from a philosophical, intellectual, and also theological perspective, with the natural environment.⁴³ Although the encyclopedists generally intended to read their world through the lens of the Bible, utilizing the material objects as symbols or allegories of the spiritual world (ultimately, offering exegesis), they still opened their readers' eyes toward the space outside of the domestic sphere, the house, the palace, the monastic cell, the church, or the court.⁴⁴

To illustrate how natural space was viewed and treated by these authors, let us consider at least one example from the Cornish writer John Trevisa's (1342–1402) translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*.⁴⁵ As the word 'encyclopedia' indicates, virtually every imaginable aspect of the physical existence is being treated more or less meticulously and objectively, at least in the

g. animals; h. others. See also the contributions to *Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum: Texte latin et réception vernaculaire. Lateinischer Text und volkssprachige Rezeption (Actes du colloque international – Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums – Münster, 9.–11. 2003)*, ed. Baudouin van den Abeele and Heinz Meyer. *De Diversis Artibus*, 74 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

⁴¹ R. W. Hunt, *The Schools and the Cloister: The Life and Writings of Alexander Nequam (1157–1217)*, ed. and rev. by Margaret Gibson (1936; Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1984).

⁴² Dagmar Gottschall, *Konrad von Megenbergs Buch von den natürlichen Dingen: Ein Dokument deutschsprachiger Albertus-Magnus-Rezeption im 14. Jahrhundert*. *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, LXXXIII (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004). Robert Luff, *Wissensvermittlung im europäischen Mittelalter: 'Imago mundi'-Werke und ihre Prologe*. *Texte und Textgeschichte*, 47 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1999), offers an excellent survey of the entire genre. For recent studies, see *Konrad von Megenberg: (1309 – 1374); ein spätmittelalterlicher "Enzyklopädist" im europäischen Kontext. Beiträge der interdisziplinären Tagung vom 27. bis 29. August 2009 in Regensburg*, ed. Edith Feistner, together with Nina Prifling. *Jahrbuch der Oswald-von- Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 18 (2010/11).

⁴³ Konrad von Megenberg, *Das "Buch der Natur"*. Vol. II: *Kritischer Text nach den Handschriften*, ed. Robert Luff and Georg Steer. *Texte und Textgeschichte*, 54 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2003).

⁴⁴ Bernard Ribémont, *De natura rerum: études sur les encyclopédies médiévales*. *Medievalia*, 18 (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995); Mary Franklin-Brown, "Encyclopedias," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert E. Bjork. Vol. 2 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 562–63. See also the contributions to *Vom Weltbuch bis zum World Wide Web – Enzyklopädische Literaturen*, ed. Waltraud Wiethölter, Frauke Berndt, and Stephan Kammer. *Neues Forum für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft*, 21 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2005). Although the focus rests primarily on modern attempts to grasp the world in encyclopedic terms, at least within a literary framework, several studies also address medieval encyclopedias (Jürgen Mittelstrass, Karlheinz Stierle, and Frank-Rutger Hausmann).

⁴⁵ David C. Fowler, *The Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

medieval sense of the word. So it will be enough for us to listen only to what Trevisa has to say about rivers:

A ryuer hatte *fluuius* and hat þat name *a fluendo* ‘rennyng’. For as Ysider seith, a ryuer is euerelastyng rennyng, for it renneþ continulich and ceseth nost to renne but 3if þe hede þereof be ystopped oþer yturnede and ylette. It is to knowe in a ryuer euerelastyng rennyng and depnesse of place and wyndyng and turnyng of meuyng. For ofte a ryuer renneþ by ful long space of contreis and londes. Also the heuede is [to] knowen, and þe welle spryng, and þe fynal eende whidirward it renneþ, and þe manere of spryngyng.⁴⁶

Trevisa was very clear about the allegorical meaning of all material properties, as he indicated in the prologue:

The apostle seith þat þe vnseye þinges of God beth iknowe and vndirstonde by þinges þat beth iseye. Perfore diuynyte vsith holy informacioun and poesies þat mystik and dirk vndirstondinge and figuratif speches, menyng what we shal trowe, may be itake of þe liknes of þinges þat bep iseye, so þat spiritual þinges and þinges vnseye may be couenabliche ordeyned to fleisschliche and to þinges þat bep iseye (41).

Rural space, here globally understood as the material, not man-made existence, hence invites the critical investigation, and this already in the Middle Ages.⁴⁷

3. The Spatial Turn in Medieval and Premodern Studies

In the wake of the ‘spatial turn’ in literary and cultural studies over the last decade or so, profoundly initiated by Henri Lefebvre’s *La production de l’espace* (1974),⁴⁸ we

⁴⁶ John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text*, ed. M. C. Seymour. 3 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975–1988), 651.

⁴⁷ Nadia Margolis, “Encyclopedias,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1767–74.

⁴⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1974; Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 412, emphasizes that each society or culture determines and shapes its own space, and hence also space perception. See the contributions to *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka. *Medieval Cultures*, 23 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Otto Gerhard Oexle, “‘Erinnerungsorte’ – eine historische Fragestellung und was sie uns sehen lässt,” *Mittelalter und Industrialisierung: St. Urbanus in Huckarde*, ed. Thomas Schilp and Barbara Welzel. *Schriften der Conrad-von-Soest-Gesellschaft*, 12 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2009), 17–23; Stefan Kipfer, Kanishka Goonewardena, Christian Schmid, and Richard Milgrom, “On the Production of Henri Lefebvre,” *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. id. (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 1–23; here 9. See also Christian Schmid, “Henri Lefebvre’s Theory of the Production of Space: Towards a Three-Dimensional Dialectic,” *ibid.*, 27–45. Cf. Stuard Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004); Benno Werlen, *Society, Action and Space – An Alternative Human*

have realized how much all human activities, products, and performance, that is, human culture at large, must be understood in relationship to the space where they are located or brought about.⁴⁹ Although the emphasis of Spatiality Studies mostly rests on modern and postmodern phenomena, the turn toward rural space in the Middle Ages and the early modern age—and by the same token already toward urban space⁵⁰—allows us to re-balance the traditional viewpoints and comprehension of those cultures, recouping a dimension, space outside of the court and the city, from the common approach informed by topology, thereby re-injecting a clearer notion of how people operated in social, material, and ideological coordinates, particularly within nature, the wilderness, on the water, in the mountains, or elsewhere, at least outside of the city and the court.⁵¹

Research on the spatial turn has alerted us to the need to pay close attention to the interactions of bodies and objects in their social practice within a broadly defined spatial context. The contributors to the volume *Orte – Ordnungen –*

Geography (London: Routledge, 1993); Albert Gosztonyi, *Der Raum – Geschichte seiner Probleme in Philosophie und Wissenschaft* (Freiburg i. Br. and Munich: Karl Alber, 1976). For older, but still very important research on space in courtly romances, see Ingrid Hahn, *Raum und Landschaft in Gottfrieds Tristan: Ein Beitrag zur Werkdeutung*. Medium Aevum. Philologische Studien, 3 (Munich: Eidos Verlag, 1963).

⁴⁹ See the contributions to *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias. Routledge Studies in Human Geography, 26 (New York and London: Routledge, 2009). For a recent, though not very successful attempt to approach medieval courtly literature by way of viewing it through the lens of optical perceptions and a focus on spaces where the protagonists act and perform, see Carsten Morsch, *Blickwendungen: Virtuelle Räume und Wahrnehmungserfahrungen in höfischen Erzählungen um 1200*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 230 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2010); see my review, in *Mediaevistik*, forthcoming. Morsch relies, of course, heavily on the work of his doctoral advisor, Horst Wenzel, who has covered much of the same field already in his *Spiegelungen: Zur Kultur der Visualität im Mittelalter*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 216 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2009). The entire field of space perception in the Middle Ages is addressed by the contributors to *Räume der Wahrnehmung*. Thematic issue of *Zeitschrift Sprache und Literatur*, ed. Horst Wenzel, 35 (2004). See also the contributions to *Visualisierungsstrategien in mittellalterlichen Texten und Bildern*, ed. Horst Wenzel and C. Stephen Jaeger, together with Christof L. Diedrichs, Wolfgang Harms, and Peter Strohschneider. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 195 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006). Very productive now also proves to be Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Sec. ed. Rororo: Rowohlts Enzyklopädie, 55675 (2006; Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2007; 4th ed. 2010), 284–328.

⁵⁰ See the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen, 2009 (see note 2).

⁵¹ *Zentrum und Netzwerk: Kirchliche Kommunikation und Raumstrukturen im Mittelalter*, ed. Gisela Drossbach and Hans-Joachim Schmidt. scrinium Friburgense, 22 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). For a solid review, see Mirko Breitenstein, *Mediaevistik* 23 (2010): 336–40. See now the contributions to *Projektion – Reflexion – Ferne: Räumliche Vorstellungen und Denkfiguren im Mittelalter*, ed. Sonja Glauch, Susanne Köbele, and Uta Störmer-Caysa (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011). The focus rests on the poetic projection of space in medieval German and French literature, exploring the three fields of ‘spatiality of imagined spaces,’ ‘the treatment of real spaces,’ and of ‘concepts about how to operate in spaces.’

Oszillationen, based on the papers delivered at a conference at the University of Trier, December 4 and 5, 2009, emphasize, above all, the grounding of all knowledge in the “Prozesse der Verräumlichung” (processes of space creation). They raise the issues as to how information is correlated with space and order of things and how writers, among others, construct spaces of information in a variety of media, and this from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century.⁵²

Older research gave too much credit to the teachings of the Christian Church which held, as Alfred Biese comments, “that Creation, through the entrance of sin, had become a caricature, and that earthly existence had only the very limited value of a thoroughfare to the eternal Kingdom.”⁵³ He also scoured the writings of the Church Fathers, of many different religious texts from the early Middle Ages, and then turns to the chroniclers of the Crusades and late-medieval authors of pilgrimage accounts who cared very little about nature and its intrinsic value and beauty (66ff.). The impressively detailed description of the Verona pass crossing the Alps by twelfth-century Guntherus Ligurinus strikes him as highly unusual (73–74), while the Middle High German heroic epics *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrun* prove to him, once again, the absence of any, as we would say, ecocritical awareness and appreciation (75–80). Looking for evidence of true interest in nature among courtly love poets (*troubadours* and *Minnesänger*), he comes up mostly empty-handed because the tropological character of most references to nature appear to be the customary stumbling block.

As to the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1220–1240), for instance, composed by members of the learned clergy, perhaps “university” professors and teachers at the cathedral schools, Biese posits: “The dim light of churches and bare cell walls may have doubled the monks’ appreciation of blue skies and open-air life; but they were fettered by the constant fight with the senses; Nature to them must needs be less a work of God for man’s delight, than a dangerous means of seduction” (103). Only the development of Renaissance thought and culture, best represented by Boccaccio and Petrarch, opened a long-closed window toward nature: “This sentimental and subjective feeling for Nature, half-idyllic, half-romantic, which seemed to arise suddenly and spontaneously in Petrarch, is not to be wholly explained by a marked individuality, nourished by the tendencies of the period;

⁵² Here I refer to the online summary of the content, <http://www.reichert-verlag.de/default.asp> (last accessed on Nov. 11, 2011). *Orte – Ordnungen – Oszillationen: Raumerschaffung durch Wissen und räumliche Struktur von Wissen*, ed. Natalia Filatkina and Martin Przybilski. *Trierer Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften*, 4 (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2011). See also *Spatial Turn: das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, ed. Jörg Döring (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009); cf. also *The Spatial Turn*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias, 2009 (see note 49).

⁵³ Alfred Biese, *The Development of the Feeling for Nature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times*. Trans. from the German. Burt Franklin Research and Source Works Series, 61 (1905; New York: Burt Franklin, [1964]), 22.

the influence of Roman literature, the re-birth of the classic, must also be taken into account" (120). However, since Biese simply strings together a vast number of quotes from different times, cultures, and poets, he creates a helter-skelter canvas of puzzle pieces that only seem to convey a consistent cultural-historical survey of ideas about and attitudes toward nature.

While Uta Störmer-Caysa argues that courtly romances are predetermined by crystallized spaces where the protagonists operate freely without concern regarding the conditions of natural space, I have suggested that we can find numerous counter-examples, such as in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), where the role of islands, of larger bodies of water, even mountains and wild forests assume central importance.⁵⁴

4. Rural Space and Ecocriticism

We have by now progressed much beyond such positivistic approaches and have realized through a much more sensitive and open-minded reading of medieval literature and the arts how much there was a noticeable awareness of the rural space, whether regarded positively or negatively (threatening). Undoubtedly, the evidence consistently points toward the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance as the relevant period when a true change, a broad reawakening of fascination with rural space occurred.⁵⁵ However, this does not imply a complete deletion and deliberate blindness to the natural elements and environments in the earlier periods (late antiquity through the High Middle Ages). Certainly, many times the heroic epics and religious paintings convey a sense of danger and moral threat, but we still recognize a remarkable realization of the impact that rural space exerted on all individuals.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen* (see note 4); Albrecht Classen, "Spatiality in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*: Social and Lived Space within the Courtly World," *Tristania* 25 (2009): 25–48. For an insightful discussion of what a forest could really mean for a female protagonist in the Middle Ages, see the contribution to this volume by Rosa Alvarez Perez.

⁵⁵ Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: Paul Elek, 1973), 161–205.

⁵⁶ Bernard F. Huppé, "Nature in *Beowulf* and *Roland*," *Approaches to Nature in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies*, ed. Lawrence D. Roberts. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 16 (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), 3–41. As to the *Chanson de Roland*, he comments, "The upheaval of Nature so vividly and realistically described has anything but a 'realistic' function. Nature is a veil through which we perceive dimly the eternal reality" (39).

Although the narrative focus in virtually all heroic epics rests on the physical challenges by monsters or military opponents, both in the Old English *Beowulf* (ca. 1000, but perhaps also earlier or later) and in the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200), but then also in the Old French *Chanson de Roland* (ca. 1130–1170) and in the Old Spanish *El Poema de Mío Cid* (ca. 1200) we can discover, at times, a very particular concern with the natural environment. Beowulf, for instance, has to prove his heroic powers a number of times while he is swimming in the ocean, first in the competition with Breca, and later when he is diving into the depth of the water to follow Grendel's mother and to kill her in the underworld cave of ancient times. Contemptuously correcting the evil-minded Unferth, Beowulf details what had happened to him in the winter sport a long time ago:

We fought with the flood / for five nights, / swimming side by side, / until a sudden storm / and deep darkness / drove us apart. / Battle-fierce blasts blew from the north / straight in our faces, / stirring up the depths, / exciting the sea-monsters, / who swarmed to attack me.⁵⁷

Even though Beowulf had never been in danger of being overcome by the sea monsters, the narrative still underscores how much his heroic qualities were tested in the icy water, surrounded by many threatening beasts of the oceans. In fact, Beowulf cleared the waters from all those dangers and made future sea-faring safe all by himself, having defied all those dangers in the threatening world of the ocean: "But I survived those foes' / venomous assault / and the flood swept me / far, far away, / alone and exhausted, / to the land of the Finns" (1155–60). Subsequently Beowulf can only scorn at Unferth's miserable attempts to malign him and to change historical facts, trying to ridicule this unique hero for whom there existed no equal.

This early competition, however, already signaled most clearly how important the challenge in nature proved to be for Beowulf to prove his true power, strength, and resolve to fight any enemy whom he might encounter. Not surprisingly, once he is pursuing Grendel's mother and arrives at the coast where she had disappeared in the deep water, he immediately follows her, again accepting the ultimate danger for his life looming in the uncanny realm at the unknown bottom of the sea.

At first, however, Beowulf and the entire company of men follow the she-monster's trail "over murky moors / and mist-shrouded hills" (2809–10), taking them further and further away from the center of their own civilization,

⁵⁷ *Beowulf: A New Translation for Oral Delivery* by Dick Ringler (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007), 1087–98. For a critical edition with an even better translation, see *The Beowulf Manuscript: Complete Texts and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and trans. R. D. Fulk, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 122–23.

Hrothgar's famous hall. Nevertheless, Beowulf never displays any fear and eagerly follows Grendel's mother deep into her own zone of activities, she being perhaps the most awe- and fear-inspiring representative of arch-nature, mother of life and death. The poet displays great delight in presenting to us in extraordinary details, almost in a cinematographic fashion, the warriors' rush into the wilderness, as they "struggled over steep / stone-covered slopes / or threaded [their] way / through thin defiles" (2819–22).

This is not welcoming nature, pleasant pasture, or the love-filled nature of courtly love as dealt with several hundreds years later in countless poems and romances. Instead, the *Beowulf* poet takes us through a horrifying path down to the shore where Grendel's mother has left behind Æschere's head (2842), before she herself vanished into the dark of the water. The water before them is crowded with strange and cruel creatures, representatives of a most threatening and fierce domain hostile to all men. Nevertheless, Beowulf kills one of them, which they utilize as a trophy to calm their own fear and to embolden themselves, before their leader arms himself and then steps into the water, as Dante the pilgrim was to enter the realm of Inferno on his life's voyage several hundred years later.

The parallels actually extend even to the subsequent events, as Beowulf, having killed Grendel's mother and having decapitated dead Grendel, leaves all spoils behind and only takes Grendel's head and the hilt of the ancient sword, which had melted in Grendel's poisonous blood, as his trophies back on the surface. The poet underscores with all dramatic skills how much the underwater cave had been a kingdom of evil, which the protagonist now can leave behind, having cleared it from all threats: "The ocean depths / had been exorcised, / cleansed of evil, / when the cruel fiend / left this transient / and delusive world" (3239–44). Beowulf returns to his friends as the great liberator, as the new master of the world, both on the surface and deep under the sea, which seemed so unlikely to Hrothgar and his men that they all leave upon observing the blood surging in the abyss (3188–3203).

Fifty years later, however, Beowulf has to resume almost the same struggle and fight against another fiend, this time occupying the space of a cave, the monstrous dragon. As we know, at the end the by then old hero succeeds once again, but not without receiving a deadly wound by the evil creature. However, at that point one, and unfortunately the only loyal vassal, Wiglaf, rushes to his rescue and wounds the dragon seriously enough for his lord to finish off the beast.

But let us consider the way in which the poet deals with the space setting, which opens the perspective toward rural space once again, or allows us to apply an ecocritical perspective to this heroic epic. Entering the dragon's lair, Beowulf has to penetrate deeply into the earth, again approaching a hellish region into which only the bravest of them all would dare to move. He "saw stone arches / standing before him, / spewing forth streams / of splashing flame / and noxious fumes" (5089–93). The deadly battle takes place in the dragon's cave, where the hero

receives his deadly wound, but not before killing the dragon with his dagger. As in the previous battle against Grendel's mother, the protagonist is far away from his retinue, and so from the court, hence in the forbidden realm of hostile nature, which he must overcome for the well-being, if not survival, of human existence.⁵⁸

Beowulf's body is subsequently brought up from the cave, placed on a mound, and burned by the pyre, a glorious acknowledgment of his heroic deeds, now shining forth in public, openly to be seen by people far and wide, sending messages across the waters to many foreign lands. The dead dragon, however, is simply kicked "over the sea-cliff" (6263), and so this evil creature ends at the same location where Grendel's mother had died as well, squashed, destroyed, and buried in the depth of the ocean. For the anonymous poet, then, the move from the heroic court to the battleground deep under the earth, in a cave, or at the bottom of the sea, represents the ultimate turn away from earthly, civilized existence to the spiritual struggle, so he made every effort to project the archetypal clash between good and evil at the most remote locations.⁵⁹

If we considered the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200), we would find many intriguing confirmations that the Germanic hero has to struggle first and foremost against forces of nature, or against representatives of the nether world, whether dragons or dwarves. Here I would like to focus on one scene only which illustrates most powerfully how much travel through rural space allows the protagonist/s to learn what destiny holds for them. Leaving aside the most common motif of crossing bodies of water on a sea voyage, or journeying on a river to a distant goal on a bridal quest, such as to Brünhild's kingdom far in the north, here I want to focus on the one scene where Hagen ferries the entire Burgundian army across the river Danube while they travel to the Hungarian kingdom where their sister, after the murder of her first husband Siegfried, is married to King Etzel (Attila). Having already learned from wild nixies what their future holds for them all, that is certain death, except for the chaplain, the liminal

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Russom, "Historicity and Anachronism in *Beowulf*," *Epic and History*, ed. David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub. *The Ancient World: Comparative Histories* (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 243–61.

⁵⁹ F. W. Moorman, *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, 95 (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1905; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1972); Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon: The Nature of the Beast in Germanic Literature* (Enfield Lock, Middlesex, UK: Hisarlik Press, 1998); see also Betty T. Mann, "Water Imagery and the Baptism Motif in *Beowulf*," Ph.D. diss. University of North Texas, 1977 (DAI-A 38/07, p. 4149, Jan 1978); for biblical analogies in *Beowulf* and parallel Anglo-Saxon texts, see Daniel Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England*. Manchester Medieval Literature (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006). For recent studies on this famous epic, see *The Postmodern Beowulf: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Eileen A. Joy, Mary K. Ramsey, with the assistance of Bruce D. Gilchrist (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006).

figure Hagen recklessly and brutally throws the latter overboard and, preventing all others in their company from coming to the poor man's rescue, forces him to try to save his life by struggling to the river embankment.

Although the cleric really does not know how to swim, God saves him, which signals to Hagen that their chance of survival at King Etzel's court would be nil. Hence, he smashes the one and only ferryboat, because there is no need for anyone among the Burgundian warriors to think of the journey back home. They are all doomed to die, so the destruction of the boat serves exceedingly well as the most powerful symbol of their impending destiny. The poet worked out the crossing of the Danube truly magnificently, presenting us with a most meaningful reflection on the significance of bodies of water in heroic literature (see already *Beowulf*).⁶⁰

Those who face a river or a sea quickly understand that their ultimate challenge has arrived, since the crossing of that body of water constitutes the moment of truth, almost like in ancient Greek mythology where the River Styx constituted such a monumental landmark in thanatology by establishing the boundary between Earth and Hades.⁶¹ In the *Nibelungenlied*, traversing the Danube represents, in most explicit terms, the transition from life to death, although virtually unknown to the entire army, except for Hagen. Once he has realized that the nixies had been correct in their prophecy concerning the cleric and all the others' lives, he understands that they would also be right regarding the second

⁶⁰ For a critical discussion of courtly protagonists' precarious existence and the meaning of space, or rather, the crossing of and leaving behind spaces in courtly literature, see Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009). The only other significant medieval narrative where the dismantling of a ship matters profoundly can be found in the Middle High German verse narrative *Mauritius von Craûn* (ca. 1220–1230). The protagonist has a fabulous ship built for himself which allows him to travel across dry land, with horses inside the fake ship pulling the entire prop. Arriving at the castle where his lady is awaiting the beginning of a tournament, her precondition for their love affair, as she had demanded, she proves to be rather impressed, although she identifies Mauritius as the Anti-Christ, or Saint Brendan. Later, after the tournament, the protagonist hands over the ship to all the minstrels and other people in his retinue, who quickly rip the ship apart, trying to secure some valuable parts for themselves. In that process one person is even killed. We could not necessarily identify this entire account as a reflection on rural space (water), but the symbolic function of a ship is made crystal clear here as well. *Mauritius von Craûn*, ed. Heimo Reinitzer. *Altdeutsche Textbibliothek*, 113 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000); cf. Hubertus Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame: Mauritius von Craûn: Text und Kontext. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006), 101–38.

⁶¹ Brigitte Englisch, "Weltflüsse," *Burgen, Länder, Orte*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich, together with Margarete Springeth. *Mittelalter Mythen*, 5 (Constance: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2008), 981–96.

part of their prophecy concerning the outcome of the visit at King Etzel's court: "'These knights are doomed to die,' thought he."⁶²

Very similar to the experiences formulated by the narrator of *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, here we are clearly alerted to the symbolic and spiritual significance of water at large, which the protagonists have to cross in order to reach the next stage in their lives, that is, actually, their death.⁶³

In the anonymous Old French *Chanson de Roland* (copied sometime between 1130 and 1170, but probably composed sometime at the end of the eleventh century) the fundamental transition point is not at a river or an ocean, but at a mountain pass in the Pyrenees where Roland and his men suddenly face the Muslim enemies who have come upon them after Roland's stepfather has betrayed him and his men in Charlemagne's rear-guard.⁶⁴

As the narrator informs us in *laisse* 80: "Oliver is on a lofty hilltop. / He looks down to the right over a grassy vale / And he sees the approach of the pagan army" (1017–19). Realizing the mortal danger for their small band, Oliver rushes down from the hill, raises alarm, and repeatedly urges Roland to blow the horn (*laisse*s 83, 84, and 85) in order to call back Charlemagne with his huge army. Roland's arrogance, however, prevents him from listening to that advice, or rather strong appeal, which ultimately means all their doom at the hands of the Muslim opponents.

From then on the focus on nature recedes into the background since the exclusive interest rests on the battles, the slaughter of all the men, and the brave and fierce fighting. The fact, however, that Oliver observes the arrival of the Arabic army on a hill-top, rushes down to their own camp, and then tries in vain to convince Roland to call for help underscores, once again, how much the

⁶² *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. A. T. Hatto (1965; London: Penguin, 2004), Chapter 25, 198. Modern research on this epic poem is legion; see, for instance, Jan-Dirk Müller, *Das Nibelungenlied*. 3rd, newly rev. and expanded ed. *Klassiker-Lektüren*, 5 (2001; Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2009); for a variety of perspectives, see the contributions to *A Companion to the Nibelungenlied*, ed. Winder McConnell. *Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998). Now see also Albrecht Classen, "The *Nibelungenlied* – Myth and History: A Middle High German Epic Poem at the Crossroads of Past and Present, Despair and Hope," *Epic and History* (see note 58), 262–79.

⁶³ Anne Scott, "Come Hell or High Water: Aqueous Moments in Medieval Epic, Romance, Allegory, and Fabliau," *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and eadem. *Technology and Change in History*, II (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 407–25.

⁶⁴ *The Song of Roland*, trans. with an introd. and notes by Glyn Burgess (London: Penguin, 1990), *laisse* 79ff. See now the contributions to the highly useful and insightful volume *Approaches to Teaching the Song of Roland*, ed. William W. Kibler and Leslie Zarker Morgan. *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2006). However, the relevance of rural space in this heroic epic is not among the concerns dealt with here.

selection of a special spot in a forest (*El Poema de Mío Cid*), in the deep water (*Beowulf*) or at a river (*Nibelungenlied*) helped the medieval authors to present in most vivid terms how human destiny is reflected in natural space. We could also argue that the representatives of early-medieval societies who created those magnificent epics were fully aware of the extraordinary importance of the rural world with its supreme symbolic and metaphorical significance. The fight for survival of the human race, the struggle between good and evil, and the challenge of life and death all by itself were all deliberately located in the heart of nature, the world outside of constructed civilization.

In many respects the rural world, that is, both the farm and the village, the forest and the meadows, and at times even the garden in all its domesticated construction of nature, played a significant role, if not an ever growing one throughout the centuries in literature, religion, philosophy, and art.⁶⁵ Nature was commonly viewed as God's Book, and man's task consisted of deciphering and comprehending the letters written on its pages.⁶⁶

Considering the famous *Luttrell Psalter*, for instance, which was created at the end of the fourteenth century on behalf of Lord Geoffrey Luttrell (1276–1345), we can easily recognize how important the farm world was for the nobility as well, since they drew, of course, their foodstuff from there.⁶⁷ However, it is one thing to appreciate noble interests in a variety of subjects pertaining to nature, the peasant class, or animals, birds, insects, and fish, and quite another to understand to what extent noble and merchant audiences demonstrated true concern and fascination with rural space as a normal, complementary aspect of their own existence.

⁶⁵ I will later in this Introduction engage with much other scholarship, but see here, for this special topic, Sylvia Landsberg, *The Medieval Garden* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2005); cf. also Celia Fisher, *Flowers in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004). See also the contributions to *Medieval Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth Blair MacDougall. Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, 9 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986). For a special case study, see the contribution to this volume by Abigail P. Dowling.

⁶⁶ See the contributions to *The Book and the Magic of Reading in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 2118 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999); and to *The Book of Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Arjo Vanderjagt and Klaas van Berkel. Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, XVI (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005).

⁶⁷ Janet Backhouse, *Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000); *The Luttrell Psalter: A Facsimile*, commentary by Michelle P. Brown (London: The British Library, 2006); for a study of Hungarian conditions, see Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*. Studies in Russia and East Europe (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave, in association with School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2000).

As Rural Space Studies can reveal, there was already great interest in the symbolic and material function of the island, the mountain, and the forest during the premodern world. All those domains invited symbolic interpretations and offered natural imagery for archetypal aspects in human life. Rural space has always been crucial in projecting mythical elements, and the dark or lonely locations far away from urban and courtly civilization have consistently invited speculation, fantasy imagination, and dream projections.⁶⁸ The growth or shrinkage of forests, and by the same token, the expansion or reduction of the timber line on mountains depend on the climate and on human impacts, so a careful study of the interaction between people and forests in the Middle Ages, for instance, can yield far-reaching results concerning both sides of the equation.⁶⁹

Ecocriticism, perhaps a more fancy word than necessary for our purposes, can have a very healthy influence on Medieval Studies if it forces us to reexamine many of the literary, historical, or art-historical sources which we have already scoured for a myriad of other purposes and interests. Ecocriticism invites us to study with renewed interest and care what individual poets, artists, writers, and historical or other texts had to say about the natural world, rural space, and how they viewed it. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin put it in the introduction to their radical critique informed by ecocriticism,

Postcolonial studies has come to understand environmental issues not only as central to the projects of European conquest and global domination, but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects historically—and persistently—depend. Not only were other people often regarded as part of nature—and thus treated instrumentally as animals—but also they were forced or co-opted over time into western views of the environment, thereby rendering cultural and environmental restitution difficult if not impossible to achieve. Once invasion and settlement had been accomplished, or at least once administrative structures had been set up, the environmental impacts of western attitudes to human being-in-the-world were facilitated or reinforced by the deliberate (or accidental) transport of animals,

⁶⁸ Folker Reichert, "Mythische Inseln" (639–57); Albrecht Classen, "Der Mythos vom Rhein: Geschichte, Kultur, Literatur und Ideologie: Die Rolle eines europäischen Flusses vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart" (711–25); Hildegard E. Keller, "Wald, Wälder: Streifzüge durch einen Topos" (927–41); eadem, "Wüste" (997–1007), *Burgen, Länder, Orte* (see note 61) ; Albrecht Classen, "Caught on an Island: Geographic and Spiritual Isolation in Medieval German Courtly Literature: Herzog Ernst, Gregorius, Tristan, and Partonopier und Meliur," *Studia Neophilologica* 79 (2007): 69–80.

⁶⁹ *Impact of Prehistoric and Medieval Man on the Vegetation: Man at the Forest Limit. Report of the Meeting Held in Ravello, December 9, and 10, 1989, PACT Network, Palaecology*, ed. D. Moe and S. Hicks. PACT, 31 (Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe, 1990).

plants and peoples throughout the European empires, instigating wide-spread ecosystem change under conspicuously unequal power regimes.⁷⁰

Huggan and Tiffin remain, however, sensitive to the specific properties of literary texts, when they insist, “postcolonial ecocriticism preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing attention to its social and political usefulness, its capacity to set out symbolic guidelines for the material transformation of the world” (14).

One such approach proves to be the study of trees in the Anglo-Saxon period in England, which Della Hook has now developed in a painstaking and most meticulous fashion.⁷¹ She studies, first, trees first as they appear in religious, folkloric, and literary texts and serve specifically symbolic purposes; second, how Christian missionaries tended to cut down holy trees and cleared land to impose their own religion; and third, the spiritual dimension of forests and individual trees, as reflected in literary texts, not to speak of her botanical-archeological interests in trees and the question whether early-medieval England was really that woodsy and was cleared of forests only in the subsequent centuries.⁷²

She suggests that already by the Bronze Age that development had set in, so trees and forests were not in such abundance during the Anglo-Saxon era as scholarship had assumed in the past.⁷³ However we might approach this topic, we

⁷⁰ Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 6. See now also Timothy Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge, New York, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2011). However, here again the Middle Ages and the early modern age are left out. See also Serpil Oppermann, *The Future of Ecocriticism* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publications, 2011); Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures*. Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture, 16 (New York and London: Routledge, 2011). For global and specifically postcolonial perspectives, see the contributions to *Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics & World Narratives*, Bonnie Roo and Alex Hunt. Under the Sign of Nature: Explorations in Ecocriticism (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

⁷¹ Della Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape* (Woodbridge, England, and Rochester, NY: Boydell, 2010). See also the excellent review by Richard Keyser in *The Medieval Review* TMR 11.06.36 (online).

⁷² See also Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Katharyn Dunham (New York: Paragon House, 1990).

⁷³ Matthew H. Johnson, “On the Particularism of English Landscape Archaeology,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 9 (2005): 111-22; Nicholas Howe, “The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England: Inherited, Invented, Imagined,” *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe*, ed. John Howe and Michael Wolfe (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 91-112; Clare Lees and Gillian Overing, “Anglo-Saxon Horizons: Places of the Mind in the Northumbrian Landscape,” *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. id. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Alfred Siewers, “Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac’s Mound and Grendel’s Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation-Building,” *Viator* 34 (2003): 1-39; Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation, and Uses in England*, rev. ed. (1980; Dalbeattie: Castlepoint Press, 2003); Dolly Wilson [now Jorgensen], “Multi-Use Management of

can be certain that we will emerge from this debate with a healthy reevaluation of the data available to us reflecting the relationship between people and their natural environment. After all, human existence has constantly made an impact on that space, trying to conquer, control, manipulate, change, if not subdue it with all its means available, while that very space has also, which we never should forget, deeply influenced and determined humanity at large. Other scholars have also pursued that research interest, such as Alfred K. Siewers, who focuses on the early Middle Ages,⁷⁴ and Gillian Rudd, who explores the relationship between human society and its natural environment in late-medieval England.⁷⁵

The mystique and importance of the forest, which I will explore just a little later in greater detail, as it appeared to early-modern spectators, is the topic of Jeffrey S. Theis's study.⁷⁶ But it is not simply nature, i.e., the garden, the pasture, the forest, the hills, or the shore which matter in medieval and early-modern consciousness. We can, or should, even incorporate the world of fishermen, of fishponds, working on the seashore, fishing in the ocean, etc. In fact, the possibilities to find trails into the world of the peasants, or rural activities, and then, which is most intriguing, and which would explain the reference to fishery, into the close collaboration of the people working in the fields or as fishers in the ponds, particularly on the great noble estates or in monasteries, are infinite.⁷⁷

As Christopher R. Clason alerts us, there were many different categories of space, such as cosmic, courtly, urban, sacred, gendered, and hence we also need to consider very carefully how premodern societies viewed the undoubtedly rural space.⁷⁸ This involves also the terrain of the mountains, traditionally viewed with

the Medieval Anglo-Norman Forest," *Journal of the Oxford University History Society* 1 (2004): 1-16; Richard Keyser, "The Transformation of Traditional Woodland Management: Commercial Sylviculture in Medieval Champagne," *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009): 353-84. See also Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). I owe these references to Richard Keyser's review (see note 71).

⁷⁴ Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape*. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁷⁵ Gillian Rudd, *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature*. Manchester Medieval Literature (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2007).

⁷⁶ Jeffrey S. Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation*. Medieval & Renaissance Literature Series (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press; Lancaster: Gazelle, 2010). See also the contribution to the present volume by Rosa A. Perez.

⁷⁷ There are even numerous specific texts dealing with the fisher's craft; see Richard C. Hoffmann, *Fisher's Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1997). This aspect also blurs the traditional distinction between popular and high culture, between oral and literate culture, and between courtly and rural culture, as Hoffmann emphasizes (10-11).

⁷⁸ Christopher R. Clason, "Space and Nature," *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (New York and London: De Gruyter, 2010), 1563-75.

horror and great dislike throughout the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, already in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries writers and artists began to reflect on mountains in general terms, and we can certainly trace a considerable growth in the fascination with mountains, massive geological barriers but also important border markers in human consciousness. However, mountains, such as Mount Sinai, could also represent holy sites, and then were regarded with great admiration and inspired profound longing in Christian pilgrims.⁷⁹

True acceptance of mountains, for instance, did not occur really until the eighteenth century, but the evidence grew throughout the late Middle Ages and the early modern age pointing toward a new awareness about and attitude toward mountains.⁸⁰ Ernst Robert Curtius had warned us, in his seminal study on *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* from 1948 that “[m]edieval descriptions of nature are not meant to represent reality.”⁸¹ He qualifies, however, his own observation by distinguishing between medieval art and medieval literature, where the presentation of nature in its myriad of manifestations can have a plethora of functions, both realistic and symbolic, concrete and allegorical. And if we hold other evidence against his viewpoint, we would realize the great need to discriminate much more in our cultural-historical approaches than previous generations of scholars did.

The famous philosopher Joachim Ritter had strongly argued that a true awareness of landscape and rural space as aesthetically pleasing did not occur until the last third of the eighteenth century because only then the necessary development of the modern subject had happened which would be necessary for the open-minded appreciation of nature in its own terms.⁸² In this regard Ritter was deeply influenced by German Idealism, and he had no clear concept of medieval literature, the arts, and philosophy. As we will observe, both the theoretical and the practical positions of Ritter’s and also Curtius’s approach will have to be revised and viewed rather critically in light of much new evidence.

⁷⁹ See the contributions to *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai*, ed. Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Robert S. Nelson. *Cursor Mundi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

⁸⁰ See the contributions to *Heights of Reflection: Mountains in the German Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Sean Ireton and Caroline Schaumann (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012).

⁸¹ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, XXXVI (1948; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 183.

⁸² Joachim Ritter, *Landschaft: Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft*. *Schriften der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster*, 54 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963). For a critical reflection of Ritter’s highly influential comments, see now Helmut Brall-Tuchel, “Frömmigkeit und Herrschaft, Wonne und Weg: Landschaft in der Literatur des Mittelalters,” *‘Landschaft im Mittelalter? – Augenschein und Literatur*, ed. Jens Pfeffer. *Das Mittelalter: Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung* 16.1 (2011):104–30; here 105–06.

Surprisingly, when we turn to research carried out in the early twentieth century, we already find significant examples to the contrary. Alfred Biese, for example, points out that chroniclers such as Abbé Majolus of Cluny (970), Aribert of Milan (1027), Anno of Cologne (1064), and Bernard of Hildesheim (1101) reflected upon their crossing of the Alps, although they did not comment on the ice and the snow up there. In this regard they were very similar to many other travel writers far into the sixteenth century, but we have to keep in mind what their primary purpose was when they journeyed to Italy.⁸³

For example, as many later scholars in the areas of philosophy, theology, metaphysics, the history of sciences, the history of law, anthropology, culture, and iconography have taught us, the term 'nature' proves to be rather amorphous, expansive, and can be identified from many different perspectives. Alchemists interacted as much with 'nature' as theologians and poets, composers and artists, writers and scientists, both in the Middle Ages and ever since.⁸⁴ After all, we always need to keep in mind that in the premodern world the role of God as the creator of man and nature was of central and all-dominating importance, and nothing could be studied, perceived, recognized, and utilized without His help. However, as true as that might certainly be, if we operate on such a global level, discussing 'nature' in its most universal meaning, including the 'nature of man' or the 'nature of God,' the 'nature of mystical revelations,' or the 'nature of human eroticism,' as the traditional approach has often been, we face the danger of losing ourselves in a highly metaphysical, ultimately, perhaps, almost meaningless discourse.⁸⁵

⁸³ Biese, *The Development of the Feeling for Nature* (see note 53), 73.

⁸⁴ See the rich contributions to *Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter*, ed. Albert Zimmermann and Andreas Speer. 2 vols. *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 21/1–2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).

⁸⁵ See my review of *Mensch und Natur* (see note 84) in *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 28.1 (1993): 134–42. Many recent studies, however, important and valuable by themselves, have pursued just such a perspective; see, for instance, M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, with a preface by Etienne Gilson. Selected, edited, and translated by Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); see also the contributions to *Man and Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson. *Sewanee Mediaeval Studies*, 6 (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1995); and the contributions to *Mensch und Natur im mittelalterlichen Europa: archäologische, historische und naturwissenschaftliche Befunde. Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter", Friesach (Kärnten), 1. - 5. September 1997*, ed. Konrad Spindler. Akademie Friesach: Schriftenreihe der Akademie Friesach, 4 (Klagenfurt: Wieser, 1998); Wolfgang Achtnr, *Vom Erkennen zum Handeln: die Dynamisierung von Mensch und Natur im ausgehenden Mittelalter als Voraussetzung für die Entstehung naturwissenschaftlicher Rationalität*. Religion, Theologie und Naturwissenschaft, 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); *Natur als Grenzerfahrung: europäische Perspektiven der Mensch-Natur-Beziehung in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Ressourcennutzung, Entdeckungen, Naturkatastrophen*, ed. Lars Kreye, Carsten Stühling and Tanja Zwingelberg (Göttingen: Universitäts-Verlag Göttingen, 2009).

5. Space and Historical-Literary Investigations

Medieval chroniclers hesitated little to discuss specific nature settings without allegorizing them, while religious writers (and also painters) would do so quite easily. After having discussed ancient and modern examples, Ernst Robert Curtius concludes: "As the two last examples show, the motif of the bucolic contest between singers and poets ramifies organically to produce the description of a delightful spot—descriptions far more detailed than the corresponding passage in Homer, but still saturated with actual observations."⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, nature settings regularly follow rhetorical traditions, and it would be hard to ignore the common narrative strategies, yet it would also be dangerous to dismiss those nature settings, whether the wild forest or the beautiful meadow, as *locus amoenus*, identifying them as simple props without any references to or without being anchored in a true interest in the natural environment.⁸⁷

Curtius offers brilliant comparative analyses, but he might also lead us into a rhetorical fallacy that makes us forget where the poets and artists really borrowed their material from. The term "epic adumbration of landscape" (201) works exceedingly well in the critical analysis of literary and artistic works, but even the best stage prop or stage direction must have originated in some kind of awareness of the natural world, if not in some sort of fascination with and love of that world. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter closely followed Curtius's approach in their intensive discussion of medieval courtly literature, but they also admitted:

The view of the forest which prevails in high medieval romance is a reflection, albeit somewhat dated, of physical reality. In an age when forest still covered most of Western Europe, the 'wild wood' could retain something of its horror and mystery, and could be an apt symbol, therefore, of the alien wilderness. But by the late twelfth century, it is clear, the situation was changing. A rapidly expanding economy meant an increased demand for timber . . . and for the caste privileges of the chase, and the forests began to recede. From being a constant reminder of the fragile presence of man in a hostile environment, they became precious preserves for exploitation, and the proliferation of rules concerning rights and usages, protection and reservation, and especially the forest laws of the reign of Henry II, were bound to make a difference to the symbolism of the wild wood.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Curtius, *European Literature* (see note 81), 190.

⁸⁷ The world of chronicles is now beautifully 'chronicled' by the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy. 2 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), but the concept of 'space' does not find particular attention. As helpful as the supplement to the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. William Chester Jordan. Supplement, 1 (New York, Detroit, et al.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004), proves to be, there are no entries for 'space,' 'peasants,' or 'rural space.'

⁸⁸ Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes* (see note 55), 53.

On the one hand, as they affirm, there was a “close association between the developing *plesauance* of landscape and concepts of secular love,”⁸⁹ and on the other one could observe an increasing interest in creating enclosures, both in the form of gardens, often paralleling paradise, and parks, serving for hunting purposes. Anyone who has ever perused carefully an illuminated medieval manuscript might have noticed the enormous wealth of marginal drawings with specific natural scenes and setting, sometimes highly fanciful, other times highly concrete and realistic, such as in the *Howard Psalter*, BL, Arundel Ms. 83, fol. 14, from the early fourteenth century, or in the *Book of Hours* by the Spitz Master, Paris, from ca. 1420, John Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 57, fol. 89v.⁹⁰

6. Perception of Rural Space in *The Voyage of St. Brendan*: An Early-Medieval Voice

To combat the erroneous perception that the awareness of rural space developed and grew not until the late Middle Ages, or the Renaissance, here I want to discuss briefly the most famous *Voyage of St. Brendan*, which soon became a pan-European travel narrative with great religious appeal, often providing literary imagery even of an archetypal nature, hence quickly gaining the status of a mythical text. Whether this famous Brendan (Irish: Brénainn; Latin: Brendanus or Brandanus), who lived from ca. 484 to ca. 577, truly traveled far into the west and then might even have discovered America, long before the Viking Erik the Red (ca. 1000), or Columbus (1492), will not concern us here.⁹¹

The *Voyage* was first composed in Latin, in one strand of versions as *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, and in another as *Vita Brendani*, sometime in the early ninth century, and soon enough was copied and translated all over Europe, ultimately making it even into the world of incunabula and early-modern prints. Here we do not need to concern ourselves with differences in the individual versions, and subsequent receptions. What matters for us is the way rural space, or all natural space, is perceived and described in this travel account, here the *Navigatio*, which will confirm that early-medieval writers already demonstrated considerable

⁸⁹ Pearsall and Salter, *Landscapes* (see note 55), 53.

⁹⁰ Margot McIlwain Nishimura, *Images in the Margins*. The Medieval Imagination (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications; London: The British Library, 2009), 14–15 and 24. For further study of this topic, see her bibliography, 77, especially Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. Essays in Art and Culture (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁹¹ *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation with Indexes of Themes and Motifs from the Stories*, ed. W. R. J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess (2002; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005). See also Gearóid Ó Donnchadha, *St Brendan of Kerry, the Navigator: His Life and Voyage* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004).

interest in their environment and paid great attention to natural challenges, to the fascination which foreign worlds exerted on their protagonists, and to the *mirabilia* and monsters, who all figure prominently amidst surprisingly realistic contexts.⁹²

The entire account, whether focusing on St. Brendan and his men or on other figures, is strongly characterized by references to nature. In fact, despite the religious allegory of this voyage, the narrator heavily relied on elements borrowed from nature, especially because the protagonists do not explore civilized lands or islands, but enter a *terra incognita* where hellish and paradisiacal features transcend the natural sphere. But the one dimension does not eclipse the other, and in fact the material world mirrors in multiple fashion the spiritual. As much as Brendan and his disciples traverse a world of many strange islands, as much they also experience an encounter with the afterworld, hidden behind the veil of the rural elements. A few examples will suffice to confirm this observation:

and there appeared to us a land wide, and full of grass and fruit. When the boat landed we disembarked and began to go and walk round the island We saw no plants that had not flowers, not trees that had not fruit. (27)

The allusion to paradise cannot be overlooked, and yet there is a strong sense that this description was somewhat predicated on actual experiences in nature. Once Brendan, having been inspired by this mysterious report, has embarked on his own journey, he and his monks witness countless adventures, some mundane and typical of what any early-medieval traveler through the waters west of Ireland would have experienced, while others are obviously modeled after biblical images. Consciously playing on Christ's own fasting of forty days and forty nights, the company undergoes almost the same suffering:

When forty days were up and all the victuals had been consumed, an island appeared to them towards the north, rocky and high. When they came near its shore they saw a high cliff like a wall and various streams flowing down from the top of the island into the sea. Nevertheless they failed totally to find a landing place where they could put in the boat. (30)

Quite naturally, the company is tempted by the devil, and some of them prove to have fallen already earlier, and so are taken down to hell. Some islands are paradise-like, others prove to be highly dangerous despite their most pleasant appearance:

The island was stony and without grass. There were a few pieces of driftwood on it, but no sand on its shore. While the brothers spent the night outside in prayers and

⁹² *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

vigils, the man of God remained sitting inside in the boat. For he knew the kind of island it was, but he did not want to tell them, lest they be terrified. (34)

Soon enough they realize that the island is moving, because it is not an island in reality, but a humongous fish, called Jasconius. St. Brendan had been informed about this fact at night when God had sent him a vision, but the monks had to experience this miracle themselves, and so the audience. Spiritual and material features intertwine and confirm how much rural space and divine space are part and parcel of God's creation. Monsters pass by, magical birds speak to them, and at times they are granted a crystal-clear view into the depth of the ocean:

It happened on one occasion . . . they found the sea so clear that they could see whatever was underneath them. Then they looked into the deep they saw the different kinds of fish lying on the sand below. It even seemed to them that they could touch them with their hands, so clear was that sea. They were like herds lying in pastures. They were so numerous that they looked like a city of circles as they lay, their heads touching their tails. (52–53)

At one point we come even across a surprisingly detailed description of a volcano: "they saw that the mountain was no longer covered with smoke, but was spouting flames from itself up to the ether and then breathing back, as it were, the same flames again upon itself. The whole mountain from the summit right down to the sea looked like on big pyre" (56). Surprisingly, however, in this case the spiritual interpretation is not given; instead the natural image stands all by and for itself, although we can easily associate this image with Hell to which one of their brothers had been taken.

As much as he and his companions travel through a fascinating world of islands, mountains, and foreign lands, as much they experience the afterlife already here on earth, privileged by God to be witnesses of those wonders. However, despite the deep concern with allegorizing the entire travel account, it is so much predicated on concrete, natural description that we can firmly posit that this early medieval author was profoundly touched by the fascination exerted by rural, and in this case often maritime space. There would be no problem today to transform the *Navigatio* into a film script since the protagonists cross from the material to the spiritual dimension, and then back again.

Let us quickly also consider an economic-historical aspect, which will take us into a completely different textual genre, yet will allow us to contextualize *The Voyage of St. Brendan* within the practical conditions of that time vis-à-vis the perception of and attitude toward nature, domesticated or wild. The best example provides the famous *Capitulare de villis*, written on behalf of, if not even somewhat directed personally by the Emperor Charlemagne in the early ninth century—possibly also by his son, Emperor Louis the Pious in 794 during the estate reforms,

if we do not even want to assume that the document was edited and expanded at later times as well.⁹³

Although we can certainly accept the general viewpoint that the early Middle Ages knew virtually nothing about ecocritical approaches to nature, and instead utilized nature as the domain given to people by God's grace purely for their own use, it would be erroneous to treat early-medieval statements toward the rural space as completely determined by an allegorical or even anagogical perspective. After all, almost 95% or more percent of the population lived in the countryside and depended completely on stable and sufficient harvests to survive, which was actually often not quite the case.⁹⁴ Hence, agriculture and raising animals were of central importance. Rural space was thus mostly regarded in highly pragmatic terms, unless a spiritual purpose dominated the viewpoint, as in *The Voyage*.⁹⁵

The author of the *Capitulare de villis* voices his strong desire to have the estates completely serve his own purposes, and to the maximum of their potential. The instructions to the stewards are most detailed and consider virtually every aspect on the farms and the surroundings, almost like the properties of an absolutist ruler six hundred years later. As to the forests, for instance, we learn:

That our woods and forests shall be well protected; if there is an area to be cleared, the stewards are to have it cleared, and shall not allow fields to become overgrown with woodland. Where woods are supposed to exist they shall not allow them to be excessively cut and damaged. Inside the forests they are to take good care of our game; likewise, they shall keep our hawks and falcons in readiness for our use, and shall diligently collect our dues there. And the stewards, or our mayors or their men, if they send their pigs into our woods to be fattened, shall be the first to pay the tithe for this,

⁹³ For an English translation, see *The Reign of Charlemagne: Documents on Carolingian Government and Administration*, ed. H. R. Loyn and John Percival. Documents of Medieval History, 2 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 64–73. The only surviving manuscript of the *Capitulare de villis* is housed today in the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Codex Helmstadensis 254. See Ernst W. Wies, “*Capitulare de villis et curtis imperialibus*”: (Verordnung über die Krongüter und Reichshöfe) und die Geheimnisse des Kräutergartens Karls des Großen (Aachen: Einhard-Verlag, 1992). For a broader discussion, see John J. Butt, *Daily Life in the Age of Charlemagne*. The Greenwood Press “Daily Life Through History” Series (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 77–86.

⁹⁴ It seems very difficult to estimate more precisely the actual yield of harvests in the early Middle Ages, but we can be certain that it was considerably lower than in the high and late Middle Ages; see Del Sweeney, *Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice, and Representation*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); C. C. Bakels, *The Western European Loess Belt Agrarian History, 5300 BC–AD 1000* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009). For an overview of the history of research, see Harry Kitsikopoulos, “Social History and Medieval Studies,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1292–1304.

⁹⁵ Franz Neiske, *Europa im frühen Mittelalter 500–1050: Eine Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichte*. Kultur und Mentalität (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 148–61; he himself points out remarkable counter-examples, such as poems by Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 555–600) or by Walahfrid Strabo, Abbot of the Monastery of Reichenau (ca. 808–849), 159–61.

so as to set a good example and encourage other men to pay their tithe in full in the future.⁹⁶

The stewards are charged with giving accurate accounts and with acting as the most diligent managers possible. This charge extended to every aspect relevant on the estates, including fish, a very important food item within a Christian world: "That the fish from our fishponds shall be sold, and others put in their place, so that there is always a supply of fish; however, when we do not visit the estates they are to be sold, and our stewards are to get a profit from them for our benefit" (72–73; ch. 65).⁹⁷

Of course, Charlemagne is only concerned with domesticated nature, and yet his document reveals the extent to which even an emperor at that time fully understand the extreme importance of rural space. Without a good ecocritical perspective, we might say, relying on modern parlance, early-medieval estates could not run efficiently. A final example will illustrate this most poignantly, especially because here we are given insight into the delicate balance between the civilized space of the estate and the wild space of the forests: "They [the stewards] shall at all times keep us informed about wolves, how many each of them has caught, and shall have the skins delivered to us. And in the month of May they are to seek out the wolf cubs and catch them, with poison and hooks as well as with pits and dogs" (73, ch. 69).⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *The Reign of Charlemagne*, 69 (ch. 36). For an highly fascinating textual network connecting the early with the late Middle Ages with regard to natural sciences, see Brigitte Baumann and Helmut Baumann, "Die Mainzer Kräuterbuch-Inkunabeln 'Herbarius Moguntinus' (1484), 'Gart der Gesundheit' (1485), 'Hortus Sanitatis' (1491) : wissenschaftshistorische Untersuchung der drei Prototypen botanisch-medizinischer Literatur des Spätmittelalters ; unter Berücksichtigung der Vorläufer 'Etymologiae' (um 630), 'Capitulare de Villis' (um 800), 'Hortulus' (um 840), 'Physica' (1152), 'De Vegetabilibus' (1256/1257), 'Buch der Natur' (1475), 'Lateinischer Macer Floridus' (1. Hälfte 13. Jahrhundert), 'Deutscher Macer Floridus' (1. Hälfte 15. Jahrhundert), 'Pseudo-Apuleius-Platonicus' (1481/1482), 'Promptuarium Medicinae' (1483) und der 'Gart der Gesundheit'-'/'Hortus Sanitatis'-Nachdrucke von Grüninger (1485/1486), Furter (1486), Dinckmut (1487), Prüss (1497) sowie die in der Bildtradition stehenden Werke 'Arbolayre' (1486/87), 'Ruralia commoda' (1493) und 'Liber de arte distillandi' (1500). Denkmäler der Buchkunst, 15 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2010). The research on this document is, of course, very rich; see, for instance, Christoph Dette, "Geschichte und Archäologie: Versuch einer interdisziplinären Betrachtung des Capitulare de villis," *Realienforschung und historische Quellen*. Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Nordwestdeutschland, Beihefte, 15 (1996): 45–100.

⁹⁷ For a similar concern with managing estates and hence also fishponds in the high Middle Ages, see the contribution to this volume by Abigail P. Dowling. Cf. also Richard C. Hoffmann, *Fishers' Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages*. Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations, 12 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Dietrich Sahrhage and Johannes Lundbeck, *A History of Fishing* (Berlin, Heidelberg, et al.: Springer, 1992).

⁹⁸ Jacques Berlioz, "Les loups sont entré dans Paris: Le témoignage du *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*," id., *Catastrophes naturelles et calamités au Moyen Age*. Micrologus' Library, 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Sisme – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), 28–31; Aleksander Pluskowski, *Wolves and the*

The *Capitulare de villis* reflected clearly the great need for the Carolingian rulers to maintain a well-kept network of these estates since they provided the essential foodstuff for themselves, their households, and their armies, not to forget the critical income from sales of agricultural products. Having learned from the devastating consequences of the famine in Aquitaine in 792–793, at that time ruled by his son Louis, later called the Pious, Charlemagne took every possible precaution to prevent such catastrophes in the future. In this regard he viewed his entire empire as encompassing every person and every land, which all had to be administered with the greatest care. Considering this all-encompassing perspective, we clearly recognize in the author and ruler a man who claimed for himself the position of the *pater familiae*, or the head of a *patrocinium*, for whom, in fact, nothing in his property was of low relevance.⁹⁹

7. Nature in a Spanish Medieval Epic Poem: *El Poema de Mío Cid* Human Drama in the Wilderness

But let us quickly consider a remarkable example from the early Middle Ages where the forest and the wide open land gain astonishing attention in an unexpected context. In the Spanish ‘national’ epic *Poema de Mío Cid* from ca. 1200 late in the plot development the protagonist’s two daughters are taken by their husbands, the Carrión brothers, back to their home country. But they have proven to be true cowards and are not competent in military terms, although El Cid does not quite know this until later because his men have kept this report away from him out of a deep sense of embarrassment, but also anger and frustration.

In order to compensate for their own failings and lack of prowess, the two miserable brothers decide to take their revenge on their helpless though dignified wives, whom they whip with their belts almost to death. Once they believe that they have completed their goal, they leave the lifeless bodies behind and disappear. However, Mío Cid’s nephew, Félix Muñoz, had not left the camp completely as ordered by the Carrión brothers, and hid in thick underbrush to observe when they would follow their troupe. Once the two men then have

Wilderness in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006); Malcolm Drew Donalson, *The History of the Wolf in Western Civilization from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, ON, and Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006). For a survey of recent research on catastrophes in the Middle Ages and beyond, see the contributions to *Historische Katastrophenforschung: Begriffe, Konzepte und Fallbeispiele*, ed. Gerrit Jasper Schenk and Jens Ivo Engels. *Historische Sozialforschung*, 32.3 (Cologne: Zentrum für Historische Sozialforschung, 2007).

⁹⁹ Karl Josef Strank and Karl Schultheis, “Die Landgüterverordnung Karls des Großen: Das *Capitulare de villis vel curtis imperii*,” *Obst, Gemüse und Kräuter Karls des Grossen*, ed. Karl-Josef Strank and Jutta Meurers-Balke (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2008), 10–37.

passed, Muñoz traces their tracks back to the camp and finds the near-dead women. He can rescue them, and bring them back to their father, which subsequently initiates the lengthy judicial trial of Mío Cid against the former sons-in-law, who are ultimately badly defeated and exposed, hence also condemned and disgraced, disappearing in history.

As much as this major epic poem focuses primarily on the battle scenes and then the high-stake political trial, the poet also endeavored most intriguingly to give us a good sense of the journey through the wooded mountains, almost in a cinematographic fashion: "The Carrións left Ansarera, / Not stopping by day or night, / Passing to the left of the Atienza cliff, / Over the Miedes mountains, Dashing over the hills of Claros, / Riding to the left of Griza, built by Alamos— / Went hurriedly by San Esteban, to the right, / And came to the Corpes woods, / Where oaks grow so tall their branches almost scrape the sky, / And fierce wild beasts are everywhere."¹⁰⁰

Once the evening has set in, the company is looking for a resting place, and find a location that strongly reminds us, once again, of a *locus amoenus*: "They found a clearing, through which a spring went running, / And ordered a tent set up" (128). In order to deceive everyone, even their own wives, the brothers display the most loving manners, acting as loving husbands: "They slept there, that night, with all their men, / Often embracing their wives, and showing their love" (128). Early in the morning, however, once the camp has been packed up, the brothers order everyone to leave, allegedly for personal, intimate purposes: "They wished to enjoy them [their wives], completely alone" (128).

This strategy works, and when they are alone, the horrible beating begins, although the two women beg their mean-spirited and foul husbands to decapitate them so that they could die an honorable death as martyrs, and not be humiliated through the deadly whipping. All their pleading is to no avail, which then leads the narrative plot to the next major events, mentioned above. But there is one more important reference to the forest wilderness in which Muñoz discovers the two miserable victims, since he is desperately trying to rescue them: "Covering them both with his cloak, / Then quickly took the reins and led them away. / Completely alone, in the Corpes forest, / He got them out of the mountains by the end of the day" (191, canso 131).

The rural space proves to be most critical for the Carrión brothers to carry out their criminal act, trying to murder their wives in a most shameful manner. Their vicious behavior gains particularly in negativity because they transgress the

¹⁰⁰ *The Song of the Cid: A Dual-Language Edition with Parallel Text*, trans. by Burton Raffel. Introduction and Notes by María Rosa Menocal (London: Penguin, 2009), 185, canso 128. See now *Cantar de Mio Cid*, ed., estudio y notas de Alberto Montaner, con un ensayo de Francisco Rico. Biblioteca clásica / Galaxia Gutenberg (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg: Círculo de Lectores, 2011).

typical *locus amoenus* and make it into the site of their attempted murder. However, the poet also utilized the loneliness of the forested mountain region to facilitate Muñoz's successful rescue operation. Although the *Poema de Mio Cid* falls squarely into the genre of heroic epics, it also contains, as we may conclude, a significant openness toward the rural space and treats it with great attention to detail, almost as much as we are wont to observe normally in late-medieval literature. One of the reasons might be that the poet intended to underscore the criminal act even further and locate it in virginal land, as a negative mirror of the attempted double-murder.¹⁰¹

8. The Mountain in the Art and Literature of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: The Most Massive Challenge in Nature

Certainly, in the Middle Ages the mountain was, apart from being deeply threatening because of its sheer physicality, height, freezing temperatures, and lack of water, the site where God did and could show Himself again, and this in direct response to the many different statements in the Old and the New Testament. A good example for this would be the "Bamberg Apocalypse," an Ottonian manuscript from ca. 1010, showing the Lamb of God on top of a mountain (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Bibl. 140). Numerous artists projected the mountain as the site where man could encounter God, such as in the "Pope Leo's Bible," in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. gr. 1 B, fol. 155v. Similarly, the mountain could provide divine inspiration; it could be the site of God's Passion, or it could serve as an important backdrop for human events, reflecting on emotional attitudes and sensations, when war scenes were depicted, especially in the context of the Trojan War, such as in Guido de Columna's *Trojan War*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2773, fol. 9v.

Turning to Renaissance paintings, especially of hermits and saints, we observe a growing interest in depicting mountainous landscapes that closely interact with

¹⁰¹ For further discussion of this epic poem in eco-critical terms, see now Connie Scarborough, "Geographical and Allegorical Settings: An Ecocritical Reading of "Afrenta de Corpes" in the *Poema de Mio Cid*," *Mediaevistik* 24 (2012), 111–24. She concludes most appropriately: "In the *Afrenta de Corpes*, the attack on the Cid's daughters must occur outside the center—in the *robledo*, i.e., the wilderness space, whereas, the restitution of honor must occur in the Cortes and on the field of combat—spaces fully under societal control. The natural settings for these events cannot be considered merely as 'backdrop' or 'landscape.' . . . Either a literal cartographical reading or an exclusively allegorical reading of these spaces limits our appreciation of the dramatic tensions and nuanced construction of space achieved by the Cid poet" (124).

the figures in order to underscore the spiritual meaning. As Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch now comments,

Berge sind in den mittelalterlichen Darstellungen bis weit ins Spätmittelalter topische Elemente. Sie dienen der Narration, indem sie den Ort- oder Szenenwechsel bezeichnen. Nicht selten übernehmen sie attributive Aufgaben, etwa im Sinne der Erhöhung einer Figur oder einer Burg. Für diese Zwecke genügt eine Chiffre, eine Erhebung oder etwas ausführlicher seit dem 13. Jahrhundert der byzantinische Schollenberg. Zweitens: Der Berg gewinnt in gewissen Zusammenhängen . . . im Hochmittelalter nahezu ausschließlich in der christlichen Ikonographie – eine metaphorische Bedeutung . . . Zunehmend lässt sich im Laufe des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts eine einfühlsame Zusammengehörigkeit von Berg und Mensch beobachten.¹⁰²

[In medieval depictions mountains are, far into the late Middle Ages, topical elements. They serve the narration by way of signaling the change of places and scenes. They assume quite often attributive functions, for example by lifting a figure up to heights, or presenting a castle on top of a mountain. For this purpose a small indication was enough, such as a slight elevation or, more extensively since the thirteenth century, the Byzantine mountain consisting of folds. Secondly, the mountain assumes in certain contexts during the high Middle Ages, almost exclusively in Christian iconography, a metaphorical meaning. . . . Increasingly, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we observe an intuitive/sensitive correlation between man and mountain.]

As many literary examples confirm, the mountain was commonly regarded as a mythical entity where miraculous events could take place, where the divine became manifest, where heroes demonstrated their true character and strength, where protagonists could find refuge, or where they were exiled to.¹⁰³

One of the most charming and intriguing references to a major mountain in medieval literature can be found in the *lai* “Les deus amanz” by Marie de France (ca. 1180–1190) where a jealous father tries to keep his daughter all for himself after the death of his own wife. When his people begin to reproach him for this inappropriate behavior, casting a bad light on him as her father, he sets up a challenge that only the one man would win her hand in marriage who could carry her up the mountain without resting. This task, however, proves to be impossible, as the king has foreseen and hoped for. Finally, a young man, deeply in love with the princess, who returns his feelings, endeavors to achieve that task. She sends

¹⁰² Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, “Der Berg als Bildmetapher in der Kunst des Mittelalters,” *Das Mittelalter* 16 (2011): 47–71; here 70. All references to those specific art works are taken from her study.

¹⁰³ Claude Lecouteux, “Der Berg: Sein mythischer Aspekt im Mittelalter,” *Burgen, Länder, Orte*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich, together with Margarete Springeth. *Mittelalter Mythen*, 5 (Constance: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2008), 109–20.

him to her aunt in Salerno who concocts a special potion that would give him the necessary strength to achieve the feat.

Tragically, however, the young man suddenly feels so inspired to prove his own strength in view of the public that he refuses to take the potion, although she offers it to him several times when she realizes his oncoming fatigue. His lack of moderation proves to be his fatal flaw, although he actually reaches the top carrying her in his arms. But hardly has he reached that point, “he fell down and never rose again, for his heart left his body.”¹⁰⁴ As soon as the prince has realized her lover’s death, she “lamented him loudly and then threw away the vessel containing the potion, scattering its contents so that the mountain was well sprinkled with it, and the land and surrounding area much improved. Many good plants were found there which took root because of the potion” (85). Marie then only mentions that the princess also died, out of grief. Out of respect for their deep and true love, the dead couple is later buried on the top of the mountain, which thus becomes a memorial to these memorable young people and their profound passion for each other. Of course, there would be much to criticize here, especially the young man’s stubbornness and recalcitrance, refusing to listen to her life-saving advice. However, this short *lai* emerges as an unsuspected poetic paean to a mountain because it becomes the site where tragic love finds its end.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, at closer analysis we discover how much Marie voiced criticism of the court at large, ignored urban settings altogether, and presented, quite regularly, the forest or the countryside as an almost ideal refuge from the dangers involved with life at court, such as in her *lai* “Lanval.”

Considering contemporary encyclopedic writing, or the reflections by medieval scientists, we also would have to recognize that the mountain itself was well understood as a geo-physical entity, the origin and properties of which could be explained reasonably well. A good example for this observation can be found in John Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum*. Repeatedly referring to Aristotle, Trevisa comments, “Also in *libro methereologicorum* Aristotel seith þat sometye mounteyns ben ymade by stronge ertheskakyng, for sometye [þer]by erthe is arered and ymade a mountayne; [as] of a grete reyne of water cometh holowenesse and is made a valeye. Also þer he

¹⁰⁴ *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. with an introduction by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (London: Penguin, 1986), 84.

¹⁰⁵ Scholars have often commented on this famous *lai*, such as R. Howard Bloch, *The Anonymous Marie de France* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 89–91; Anna Kukulka-Wojtasik, *La dame et l’amour au Moyen Age: Symbolique du portrait amoureux dans la littérature courtoise du XIIe siècle* (Warsaw: Université de Varsovie, 2007), 178–82. The highly instrumental function of the mountain, however, in many ways fully integrated into the world of courtly society, has escaped most researchers.

seith þat þe commynge and þe goynge of þe see forwerieþ and brekeþ þe lond in some place and makeþ hilles.”¹⁰⁶

Moreover, he refers to the many minerals and ores one can extract from mountains; then he stresses that some mountains are volcanoes, that some are so high that their peaks are snow-capped, such as the Caucasus, the mountains in Lebanon, and the Pyrenees. This is all book knowledge, since he refers exclusively to his learned authorities and the Bible, and so it does not come as a surprise that he as an English author does not even mention the Alps (696–97). Nevertheless, the special details characteristic of mountains appear to be correct, so when Trevis points out with regard to Mount Tabor, “Þere ben hiz treen þat lesen nou3t here leues neþer grene colour in wynter neþer in somere. Þere is songe of dyuers and many briddes and foules and here voice is likynge to þe herynge, and dyuers disposicioun of here feþeren is likynge to þe syst, and swetenesse is lykyng to þe taast” (716).

9. Climbing the Mountain, or Ascending to the Renaissance? Francesco Petrarca’s Reflections on Nature

One of the most important literary examples for this fundamental change in the attitude toward the mountain was provided by Petrarch (1304–1374), when he climbed the Mont Ventoux and reported about it in his letter from 1336 or later (until the late 1350s) to his friend, the Augustinian monk Dionisio da Borgo San Sepolcro. He had been Petrarch’s confessor, who had once given him a copy of St. Augustine’s *Confessiones*, which plays an important role in Petrarch’s account, now contained in his *Epistolae Familiares* (IV, 1; *Letters on Familiar Matters*). Irrespective of many topoi and narrative strategies that underscore this famous text, it powerfully illustrates a significant paradigm shift that deserves close attention in our context.

Petrarch explains his motivation to do that ascent with a simple reference to his “wish to see what so great a height had to offer” (14).¹⁰⁷ Then, of course, he qualifies this statement and adds that not only had he wondered about that

¹⁰⁶ Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things* (see note 46), vol. 2, 695–96.

¹⁰⁷ *The Italian Renaissance Reader*, ed. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Mark Musa (New York: Penguin, 1987), 14–21. For the historical-critical edition, see Francesco Petrarca, *Le Familiari*, ed. Vittorio Rossi and Umberto Bosco (1968; Florence: Le Lettere, 1997). Petrarch is too well known to need further introductions; but see *Petrarch: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, ed. Victoria Kirkham and Armando Maggi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); see also Gur Zak, *Petrarch’s Humanism and the Care of the Self* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Specifically regarding his ascent, see Jens Pfeiffer, “Petrarca und der Mont Ventoux,” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* NF 47 (1997): 1–24.

mountain for many years, living at its foot, but that he also had been inspired to accomplish this feat through his study of Livy's *History of Rome* which includes a passage about King Philip of Macedon who climbed Mount Haemus in Thessaly—which is actually Mount Balkan in Bulgaria, located in Thrace, not in Thessaly. The promise to be able to see into the far distance from the summit deeply appealed to Petrarch, who later relates about his own experience: "I stood there like a dazed person. I could see the clouds under our feet, and the tales I had read of Athos and Olympus seemed less incredible as I myself was witnessing the very same things from a less famous mountain" (17).¹⁰⁸

Combining his actual observations with his inner longing for his home country, Petrarch comments: "I turned my eyes toward Italy, the place to which my heart was most inclined. The great and snowcapped Alps seemed to rise close by, though they were far away—those same Alps through which that fierce enemy of the Roman name once made his way, splitting the rocks, if we can believe the story by means of vinegar" (17). In fact, the ascent made it possible for him to reconnect, at least in his mind, with his home country, with his friends in the far distance. Petrarch blames himself for this moment of weakness, and yet also insists on the validity of his longing, which many authorities would have supported, considering the humanistic value of friendship and of the identity with one's home.

The critical challenge of climbing this mighty mountain—still a challenge today, to be sure—consisted of, first, finding the right companion, and since Petrarch then realized that he could not really trust any of his friends to meet his expectation on this expedition, he finally settled on his younger brother, who was delighted at the "thought of acting at the same time as a friend as well as a brother" (15). In other words, confronting the tasks of 'conquering' dangerous and unfamiliar rural space allowed Petrarch to analyze and then comprehend the true nature of his friends.¹⁰⁹

When these two are about to begin with their ascent, they encounter an old shepherd who tries very hard to discourage them from their endeavor because "Never, according to what he or his friends knew, had anyone ever tried the ascent before or after him" (15). However, particularly the novelty of the climb motivates

¹⁰⁸ I have explored this topic more broadly and in comparison with several other texts in Albrecht Classen, "The Discovery of the Mountain as an Epistemological Challenge: A Paradigm Shift in the Approach to Highly Elevated Nature. Petrarch's *Ascent to Mont Ventoux* and Emperor Maximilian's *Theuerdank*," *The Book of Nature and Humanity: Natural and Human Worlds in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hawkes. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹ Albrecht Classen, "Friendship—The Quest for a Human Ideal and Value: From Antiquity to the Early Modern Time," *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, ed. id. and Marilyn Sandidge. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 6 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1–183; here 63–66.

the two brothers even further, and in this regard their ascent might well be considered a hallmark of the early modern age in which rural space begins to attract people simply for its own sake.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, Petrarch was certainly not the naive naturalist who viewed any physical elevation as what it is, a simple challenge that needs to be met for its own sake. His highly stylized and strategizing account constantly reveals how many literary, philosophical, and ethical concepts inform his report, which might, or might not be realistic, although this would not matter for us in the present context.¹¹¹ Petrarch simply states that he is climbing the mountain, and he does so not out of necessity, but because he wants to do so. Of course, by the same token the ascent allows him to reflect on many different aspects, and being the great writer that he was, he immediately transforms his own attempt to climb that enormous height into a metaphor of his own and of all human life.

He quickly feels tired and exhausted, so he begins to look for an easier way uphill, not realizing for a long time that he is really walking downhill again: "Thus, once again I found myself taking the easy way, the roundabout path of winding hollows, only to find myself soon back in my old difficulty. I was simply putting off the trouble of climbing; but no man's wit can alter the nature of things, and there is no way to reach the heights by going downward" (16).

Whether we have to read the entire account as topological or not, would not change anything in the fascinating approach to the mountain in the first place, particularly because Petrarch utilizes his ascent as a metaphor of human life at large and demonstrates how much all people are, in fact, involved in a constant climb and need to remember the need to reflect carefully about the path which they take to reach the peak in a most efficient and straightforward fashion, the way that Petrarch's brother does it, even though he is not reported as having reflected on his own action in any way.

¹¹⁰ This was to become one of the critical issues in the Renaissance at large; see, for instance, Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); see also Daniele Duport, *Le jardin et la nature: ordre et variete dans la litterature de la Renaissance. Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance*, 363 (Geneva: Droz, 2002); Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance*. Princeton Essays on the Arts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); a very different perspective, certainly far-reaching in this context, prove to be the contributions to *Rural and Urban: Architecture Between Two Cultures*, ed. Andrew Ballantyne (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹¹¹ One of the best critical introductions to Petrarch's life and work, with a strong emphasis on the intellectual background, proves to be Karlheinz Stierle, *Francesco Petrarca: Ein Intellektueller im Europa des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Munich and Vienna: Hanser, 2003); see also *Essays über Petrarca*, trans., ed., and commented by Giuseppe Gazzola and Olaf Müller. Stauffenburg-Bibliothek, 4 (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2006); William T. Rossiter: *Chaucer and Petrarch*. Chaucer Studies, 41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Being exposed to the hardship of climbing the steep slopes of Mont Ventoux, Petrarch realizes what approach he would have to take to improve his life and to lift himself out of the doldrums of his ordinary existence: "These thoughts stimulated my body and mind to a remarkable degree and made me face up to the difficulties which still remained. Oh, that my soul might follow that other road for which I long day and night, even as today I conquered material obstacles by bodily force!" (16–17). In fact, the mountain itself thus becomes a metaphor, if not the catharsis itself, insofar as Petrarch suddenly comprehends and formulates most clearly: "And why should it not be far easier: after all, the agile, immortal soul can reach its goal in the twinkling of an eye without intermediate space, while progress today had to be slow because my feeble body was burdened by its heavy members" (17).

Not surprisingly, once his mind has been cleared of all obscure thoughts and emotions, having even distanced himself from the feelings of longing for Italy, Petrarch recognizes what his real task would be, right there on top of the mountain, that is, to begin the search for his own soul, which he initiates by pulling out of his pocket St. Augustine's *Confessiones* and studying the deep insights offered by the Church father. In direct response to the fascination which the panoramic view from the top of the mountain offers him, but now listening closely to the theological teachings, Petrarch realizes how much he had been blinded to the true treasure in human life, his own soul: "I should have learned a long time ago from the pagan philosophers themselves that nothing is admirable but the soul beside whose greatness nothing can be as great. Then, having seen enough of the mountain I turned an inward eye upon myself, and from that moment on not a syllable passed my lips until we reached the bottom" (19).

As much as the ascent hence seemed to him a dangerous temptation to ignore the interior world in favor of the external, or, to forget about the spiritual dimension in favor of the material, as much as it also helped him to grasp the significant difference, so he can finally return his gaze to the mountain and fundamentally situate it into its proper context and relevance: "How many times I turned back that day to look at the mountain top which seemed scarcely more than a cubit high compared with the height of human contemplation, unless it is immersed in the foulness of the earth?" (19). In other words, the mountain itself thus proves to have been of no epistemological significance, and yet the ascent reveals its true nature, as a metaphor of the body's climb toward the self. Petrarch convincingly demonstrates how much the natural world plays a role in human epistemology, even if only by default as in his case. The ascent certainly served him exceedingly well to gain deeper insight into the essence of his own existence and his larger relationship toward God.

10. Oswald von Wolkenstein: The Aristocrat versus the Peasant Secret Longing for Life in Rural Space?

The landed gentry lived in much closer social proximity to the peasant population than we might usually assume, but if we consider some late-medieval poetry we can find plenty of evidence for this argument. In Oswald von Wolkenstein's (1376/77–1445) œuvre, for example, a number of poems reflect on the experience of the narrative voice in nature, on the farm, in conflict with the rural neighbors, and their own activities in the fields and pastures.¹¹² In "Ir alten weib" (Kl. 21) the poet composed a jubilating song on the revival in Spring after the cold winter, including remarkable references to the farmer's work as well and, as the concluding cascade of onomatopoeic phrases representing uninhibited love-making in nature signals, common terms for attracting chicken to their food. In "Vil lieber grüsse süsse" (Kl. 42) Oswald experimented with the traditional genre of nature or spring songs, but expanded the imagery considerably, including a wide range of plants, flowers, shrubs, and bushes that begin to bloom and to grow in the warm season.¹¹³

The poet goes so far to refer even to mushrooms and worms that delight in the splendid environment, and then concludes, once again, with intense images of love-making on the meadow. As Burghart Wachinger now comments, raising important rhetorical questions: "Stehen dahinter nur die realen Erfahrungen des Landedelmanns? Oder wird hier, wie auch immer an den ungelehrten Ritter

¹¹² *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. Karl Kurt Klein with Walter Weiß and Notburga Wolf. 3rd, newly revised and expanded ed. by Hans Moser, Norbert Richard Wolf, and Notburga Wolf. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 55 (1962; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987); see Lambertus Okken and Hans-Dieter Mück, *Die satirischen Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein wider die Bauern: Untersuchungen zum Wortschatz und zur literarhistorischen Einordnung*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 316 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981); Albrecht Classen, "Der Bauer in der Lyrik Oswalds von Wolkenstein," *Euphorion* 82.2 (1988): 150–67. It would indeed be absurd to trace a pre-Romantic perception of nature in Oswald's poems. He did not, very similar to most contemporary poets, idealize the mountains or the dark forests of his home country in the South-Tyrolean Alps. However, we can certainly confirm that he reflected upon the nature surrounding his castle Hauenstein, that he dealt with the rural population, and even included typical dialect phrases, or words from the Ladinian language. See Roland Verra, "Oswald von Wolkenstein und Ladinien," *Oswald von Wolkenstein – Leben – Werk – Rezeption* (see note 1), 101–08. He refers especially to Oswald's song Kl 116 "Zergangen ist meins herzen we" in which the poet introduces a remarkable Spring scenario as he observed it in his mountainous home country, placing great emphasis on the delight which he felt when listening to the chorus of birds welcoming the new warm season. Oswald describes in detail how the snow is melting on the mountain slopes and how the earth is breathing again, filling all creeks and rivers with rushing water. In the second stanza he approaches the animals and encourages them to leave their burrows, to venture out again into the meadows, and to enjoy their lives.

¹¹³ See my contribution to this volume ("Utopian Space in the Countryside").

vermittelt, die umfassende Vitalität spürbar, die dem mittelalterlichen Naturbegriff inhärent ist?"¹¹⁴ (Do we discover behind all that only the real experiences of the member of the landed gentry? Or can we sense here, however transmitted to the uneducated knight, the all-encompassing vitality that is inherent in the medieval concept of nature?). He subsequently suggests that we might recognize in Oswald's poetry one of the most important, late-medieval concretizations of the experience of nature by way of the erotic.¹¹⁵

Quite differently, yet still focusing on the personal experiences with the rural setting and population, Oswald reflects on his personal misery, being cut off from the previously courtly world, international travels, and public esteem at the imperial court. Trying to compensate for his deep frustration with everything, both his personal life and the conflicts with his farmer neighbors and his territorial duke, Oswald, despite his somber mood, skillfully and refreshingly discusses the natural environment of his castle Schlern, complaining about the loneliness in the Tyrolean forests, the fearful impression conveyed by the tall mountains and deep valleys, and the economic crisis in his personal life. He impressively contrasts the dazzling life on the international political stage that he had enjoyed in the past, with the plain existence now back home, stuck in the Alps:

Wellent ich gugg, so hindert mich
 köstlicher ziere sinder,
 der ich e pflag, da für ich sich
 neur kelber, gaiss, böck, rinder,
 und knospot leut, swarz, hässeleich,
 vast rüssig gen dem winder;
 die geben müt als sackwein vich. (43–49)

[Wherever I look, the burnt-out remains
 of most valuable decorations block my view.
 Instead of her with whom I once enjoyed company,
 I only see calves, goats, rams, and cows
 and clumsy people, sunburned and ugly,
 entirely covered by soot during winter.
 They make me happy like bad wine and roaches.]¹¹⁶

Although he expressed strongly negative feelings about the rural population, he revealed through these few verses how much he was actually aware about them and willing to incorporate some allusions to them.

¹¹⁴ Wachinger, "Natur und Eros" (see note 18), 94.

¹¹⁵ Wachinger, "Natur und Eros" (see note 18), 95.

¹¹⁶ Albrecht Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein: An English Translation of the Complete Works (1376/77–1445)*. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

These ultimately indicate clearly that our notion of a strong separation of the social classes in the Middle Ages might be a modern myth. In fact, if we turn to earlier times and include the poetry by the Austrian-Bavarian Minnesinger Neidhart (formerly, though incorrectly, identified as 'von Reuenthal,' which was only the name of his poetic figure),¹¹⁷ we encounter a wealth of songs in which the peasant world figures prominently. In the Spring songs, the knightly figure Neidhart enjoys the erotic favor of the village girls, and sometimes even of their old mothers;¹¹⁸ in the Winter songs, by contrast, here disregarding those where the poetic figures enjoy ice skating and other outdoor activities, the protagonist faces hard times, lacking in funds, not having a warm abode, while the rich village lads proudly display their wealth and ridicule their knightly opponent.¹¹⁹

We would not be hard pressed to identify other medieval poetry, romances, chronicle literature, or hagiographical texts where the peasant world, the farmer, or the farm animals figure so prominently.¹²⁰ For instance, and most stunningly, if we turn to the rich corpus of *Books of Hours*, we discover countless references to farming and agriculture,¹²¹ which confirm the transparency of the social

¹¹⁷ *Neidhart-Lieder: Texte und Melodien sämtlicher Handschriften und Drucke*, ed. Ulrich Müller, Ingrid Bennewitz, and Franz Viktor Spechtler. 3 vols. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); Dorothee Lindemann, *Studien zur Neidhart-Tradition: Untersuchungen zu den Liedern c 2, 8 und 15/16 der Berliner Handschrift c* (Edition und Kommentar), zum Spiegelraubmotiv und zu den Fürst-Friedrich-Liedern (Herne: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Kunst, 2004); Albrecht Classen, "The Ultimate Transgression of the Courtly World: Peasants on the Courtly Stage and Their Grotesque Quests for Sexual Pleasures. The Poetry by the Thirteenth-Century Austrian-Bavarian Neidhart," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 36 (2010): 1–24. For a good summary of the basic facts regarding Neidhart, see Günther Schweikle, *Neidhart*. Sammlung Metzler, 253 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990).

¹¹⁸ Anna Kathrin Bleuler, *Überlieferungskritik und Poetologie: Strukturierung und Beurteilung der Sommerliedüberlieferung Neidharts auf der Basis des poetologischen Musters*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 136 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), 63 and 117.

¹¹⁹ Bruno Fritsch, *Die erotischen Motive in den Liedern Neidharts*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 189 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1976), 43–48; Wachinger, "Natur und Eros" (see note 18), 75–77.

¹²⁰ Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*. Figurae (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages*, ed. Evelyn Antal and John Harthan (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press [1971]); Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994); *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona C. Flores. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1716 (New York: Garland, 1996). For a discussion of how people in the Middle Ages treated animals and what feelings they might have had toward them, see now Peter Dinzelsbacher, *Gebrauchstiere und Tierfantasien: Überblick über das Verhältnis des Menschen zum Tier in der europäischen Geschichte*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 31–34 (2011): 1–7.

¹²¹ Wendy Beckett, *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages: The Calendar Pictures in the Duc de Berry's Très Riches Heures*. Adventures in Art (New York: Prestel, 1997). See also Albrecht Classen's contribution on *Books of Hours* in this volume. For an excellent survey, see *The Fitzwilliam Book of Hours MS 1058–1975*. Commentary by Stella Panayotova (London: The Folio Society, 2009).

boundaries also at those times. Oswald provides another excellent confirmation for this observation with his poem “Stand auff, Maredel” (Kl. 48) in which the noble poet presents to us a very mundane situation on the farm, or perhaps at an estate where the lady, or the farmer’s wife, wakes up her maid Maredel and forces her to get up from her bed in which she has spent the night with her lover Chünzel. The maid is morose and does not want to comply with the command since it is still too early and she would prefer to spend more time with Chünzel. The lady, however, is ruthless and does not let up with her demands, calling up other farm hands and maids, while she insists that this Chünzel stay with her—perhaps because she has erotic intentions with him as well? Maredel bitterly complains about the pain which work causes, and insists how much she loves the young man. Whatever her mistress might tell or promise her, she pays only attention to her lover: “sein leib pringt freuden vil, darnach sich sennt mein gier” (37; He gives me much happiness, and that’s what I desire very much).

In another context we also learn of the military conflicts between the landed gentry and the rural communities that joined forces with the territorial duke. Oswald developed this theme powerfully in his song “‘Nu huss!’ sprach der Michel von Wolkenstein” (Kl. 85) which might well be one of the best war songs in medieval German literature, perhaps based on a similar one by Giannozzo Sacchetti, “Mentre io d’amor pensave, udii gridare.”¹²² The historical context of that war song, which describes in most dramatic terms, the breaking up of a siege of castle Greiffenstein (if not castle Rafenstein) in 1418, in which the Wolkenstein brothers were involved, does not concern us here.¹²³ What matters, however, concerns the contemptible remarks about the futile attempts by the farmers from the neighboring villages to align themselves with the Duke of Tyrol and to help him defeat the landed gentry. Oswald presents a most lively poetic portrait of the counter attack and includes biting mockery about these peasants who had allegedly broken their loyalty oaths and now would suffer in the military melee (17–20).

There is no doubt about Oswald’s strongly aristocratic orientation, or his ‘class’ consciousness, clearly rejecting the peasant world as much as any other aristocrat would have at his time. Nevertheless, in some of his poems he reveals a certain feeling of being attracted to the seeming freedom which the peasants could enjoy in nature. More specifically, for him the full delight in love was apparently only

¹²² Albrecht Classen, “Giannozzo Sacchetti’ *Mentr’ io d’ amor pensava* as a Source for Oswald von Wolkenstein’s Song-Poetry,” *Monatshefte* 80.4 (1988): 459–68. For an edition of Giannozzo Sacchetti’s songs, see *Rime*. Ed. critica a cura di Tiziana Arvigo. Scelta di Curiosità Letterarie inedite o rare dal secolo XIII al XI, CCXCVI (Bologna:Commissione per i testi di lingua, 2005).

¹²³ Werner Marold, *Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, rev. and ed. Alan Robertshaw. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft. Germanistische Reihe, 52 (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik, 1995), 216–20.

possible, as many other medieval poets reflected, if he could partake in the pleasures of nature and experience the same lust and erotic excitement as all the plants and animals, and then, of course, the peasants as well.

Otherwise we would not be able to explain some of Oswald's most intriguing and playfully erotic songs in which the sexual joys find their realization in a very rural setting, such as in "Treib her, treib überher" (Kl. 92), which closely follows the tradition of the *pastourelle*, but is no longer predicated on any social class conflict. Instead, a shepherd simply tries to seduce a shepherdess on the other side of the fence to join him in love-making. Despite all her hesitations, at the end she agrees, and the two people spend the rest of the afternoon in erotic embrace.¹²⁴ Despite the playfulness of this song, and despite the adaptation of the traditional model, Oswald truly idealizes the sexual freedom which members of the rural communities can enjoy because he obviously felt a strong attachment to the natural space and embraced it, at least during Spring time and when he was in a good mood, as the critical location for the fulfillment of love.¹²⁵

Walther von der Vogelweide (d. ca. 1220) had developed a similarly utopian perspective in his famous song "Under der linde," which will receive much more detailed attention later in this volume.¹²⁶ However, in the late Middle Ages the fascination with the rural space certainly increased considerably and gained much more respect from poets and artists alike.

11. The Perception of the Natural World: The Testimony of Medieval Courtly Literature

As recent research has demonstrated, even the world of animals, both wild and domesticated, has moved much more into our sphere of interest than in the past. While bestiaries commonly reflected the level of medieval approaches to animals,¹²⁷ a careful examination of many different sources, from hagiographies

¹²⁴ For the sexual motif, see now Albrecht Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter: Die andere Seite einer idealisierten Vergangenheit* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Dr. Michael Bachmann, 2011).

¹²⁵ *The Medieval Pastourelle*, translated and edited by William D. Paden. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 34-35 (New York and London: Garland, 1987); Geri L. Smith, *The Medieval French Pastourelle Tradition: Poetic Motivations and Generic Transformations* (Gainesville, Tallahassee, et al.: University Press of Florida, 2009).

¹²⁶ See the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

¹²⁷ See the contributions to *Beast and Birds of the Middle Ages: The Bestiary and Its Legacy*, ed. Willene B. Clark and Meredith T. McMunn. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Nona C. Flores, *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*. Garland Medieval Casebooks, 13 (New York and London: Garland, 1997); Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary; Commentary, Art, Text and Translation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006). See also the contributions to *Fauna and Flora in the Middle Ages*, ed. Sieglinde Hartmann.

to heroic epics, from courtly romances to verse and prose novellas, allows us to recognize how many different animals were commonly treated as man's friends, as companions, and supporters. Of course, just as today, most domesticated animals were used for meat supplies, for their skin (parchment), and other parts, so they were kept in stables or on pastures. And wild animals were commonly the object of hunting, one of the favorite sports in the Middle Ages for the nobility.¹²⁸ However, animals as friends also belong to that world, whether we think of the lap dog, the trustworthy and loyal horse, the proud stag, the supportive and idealistic hunting dog who never abandons his lord, or whether we consider the highly symbolic lion, the proud falcon, and the peaceful lamb, all of them did assume most human characteristics and functioned truly as friends.¹²⁹

By the same token, as much as the events in courtly literature seem to start out mostly at King Arthur's court, where a grand tournament takes place (e.g., *Erec* by Hartmann von Aue), soon enough the protagonists are challenged by outsiders or external forces and have to embark on their adventures which take them through many foreign lands, dark forests, dangerous regions, and wide open spaces where their own individuality is greatly challenged and endangered. The forest actually proves to be a most fascinating and yet also fearful territory, where outcasts, robbers, giants, dwarves, and other odd characters reside. But the courtly protagonists regularly traverse wild forests as well where they experience their most challenging adventures, whether we think of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec* and *Yvain* (or Hartmann von Aue's complimentary romances in Middle High German), or of the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Particularly the case of Yvain illustrates the power of the wild which can take hold of an individual once s/he has lost control over her/himself and suddenly joins the world of the wild. There he kills animals with his bow and arrow—remnants of human civilization for him—and then eats them raw, even drinks their blood, as a sign of the savage state he is in. Only once he makes the

Beihefte zur Mediaevistik, 8 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2007). These deal with horse sacrifice, the role of dogs, cats, camels, and other animals, then with reflections on plants and herbs in a variety of contexts. See also the excellent contributions to *Mensch und Tier in der Geschichte Europas*, ed. Peter Dinzelsbacher. Kröners Taschenausgabe, 342 (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2000), and Dinzelsbacher, "Gebrauchstiere" (see note 120).

¹²⁸ Kurt Lindner, *Die Jagd im frühen Mittelalter*. Geschichte des Deutschen Weidwerks, II (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1940); Vito Fumagalli, *Landscapes of Fear Perceptions of Nature and the City in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994); Werner Rösener, *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

¹²⁹ *Tiere als Freunde im Mittelalter: Eine Anthologie*. Eingeleitet, ausgewählt, übersetzt und kommentiert von Gabriela Kompatscher zusammen mit Albrecht Classen und Peter Dinzelsbacher (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2010); see also the contributions to *Tiere und Fabelwesen im Mittelalter*, ed. Sabine Obermaier (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

acquaintance with the hermit and learns to eat cooked meat, does he slowly begin with the recovery of his human nature, though the change of his diet does not achieve the expected result, since his sickness is mental, and not bodily.¹³⁰ As Jacques Le Goff comments,

Yvain's itinerary, as we have reconstructed it with the aid of structural analysis, intersects with and sheds light on several historical schemata. The key space, the clearing, corresponds to a very important economic phenomenon of the twelfth century, the clearing of land. Yvain's adventure follows in the footsteps of the groups of "youths" identified by Georges Duby, whose contradictory relations with the rest of society have been analyzed by Erich Köhler. Finally, the Christian atmosphere of the time is present in the very texture of the analysis, in the implicit judgment on chivalric behavior, and, more specifically, at critical transitional stages in Yvain's trajectory: a chapel watches over the stairs, the pine, and the magic fountain where everything begins; a hermit preserves Yvain's humanity; and Yvain's rehabilitation is accomplished through a confrontation with the world of the devil. In order to return to the world of culture Yvain himself must first be Christianized, and even the forest is marked by Christian signs. (131)

Particularly the foreignness and the familiarity of the forest at the same time made it so appealing to courtly authors.¹³¹ Most probably they witnessed the rapid disappearance of the ancient dense forests that had covered northern Europe until the early Middle Ages and projected fearful scenes into a disappearing landscape, just as Romantic writers were to do ca. six hundred years later. But the medieval forest is not so much an alternative space, but the location where the protagonist experiences his or her transformation, challenge, and ultimate growth into the ideal of a member of courtly society (after having left the forest). At the same time the forest proved to be a most valuable resource for wood, medicine, foodstuff (such as acorns for the swine), and, of course, wild animals to be hunted, but that is another matter here.¹³²

¹³⁰ Jacques Le Goff, "Levi-Strauss in Broceliande," id., *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (1985; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 113–14; for a good summary and further reflections on this topic, see Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182–87. She rightly concludes: "The wild-man/knights return from their proving-ground, the wilderness, and, to a man, re-embrace, and so reaffirm the values of their native society" (187).

¹³¹ Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages*, trans. Katharyn Dunham (1984; New York: Paragon House, 1990); see also the contributions to *Der Wald in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed. Josef Semmler. *Studia humaniora*, 17 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1991). For a broad overview of the history of the forest, see Jorma Ahvenainen, "Man and the Forest in Northern Europe from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 83.1 (1996): 1–24.

¹³² C. Hugounet, "Les forêts de l'Europe occidentales du Ve au XIe siècles," *Agricoltura e mondo rurale in Occidente nell'alto medioevo*. Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 13 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1966); Josef Semmler, "Der Forst des Königs," *Der Wald in*

12. Growing up in the Wilderness: Youthful Experiences in the Forest: Perceval/Parzival in the Romances by Chrétien de Troye and Wolfram von Eschenbach

One of the most intriguing treatments of the forest as a refuge from the dangerous world of knighthood can be found both in Chrétien de Troyes *Perceval* (ca. 1170) and in its complementary Middle High German 'version', Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (ca. 1205). In Chrétien's version we do not learn much about the forest since the introduction is so brief. Nevertheless, we encounter the young, almost still childish protagonist in the midst of the forest where his widowed mother has retired to, who is identified as "the widowed lady of the remote Desolate Forest."¹³³

Young Perceval operates only as a hunter, using, however, nothing but javelins, hence no advanced weapons, which reflects his primitive stage to which his mother has moved him, although he proves to be an expert in handling the javelins and knows how to kill any animal or bird with them. At the same time the narrator includes a reference to the farmers working in the vicinity, "who were sowing oats on her land; they had six plows and twelve oxen" (340). Perceval proves to be a happy fellow whom nothing seems to bother; instead he revels in the simple joys of nature, with the pleasantries of the Spring season around him and the sweet bird songs filling the air. In fact, Perceval feels so much delight about the relaxing atmosphere that he "unbridled his hunting horse and let it go graze on the fresh green grass" (340).

But soon enough the group of knights appears, introducing, so to speak, courtly civilization to this natural refuge, the focus quickly shifts away from the forest and trails Perceval's departure for King Arthur's court and ultimately for the Grail kingdom. There is a short retardation, or a slow-down of the events insofar as Perceval takes the knights to his farmers to inquire further about the whereabouts of the fleeing company, but those men are trembling with fear because of the armed men and because they know that the arrival of those knights means that

Mittelalter und Renaissance (see note 131), 130–47.

¹³³ *The Complete Romances of Chretien de Troyes*, trans. with an introd. by David Staines (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 340. For the historical-critical edition, see *Le Roman de Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, ed. William Roach. 2nd rev. and expanded ed. Textes littéraires français, 71 (Geneva: Droz; Paris: Minard, 1959). The base text there is MS. B.N. 12576. For a bibliography of secondary literature on the *Perceval*, see there 531–33. See now the contributions to *Perceval = Parzival: A Casebook*, ed. with an introd. by Arthur Groos and Norris J. Lacy. *Arthurian Characters and Themes* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Philippe Walter, *Perceval: le pêcheur et le Graal* (Paris: Imago, 2004). See now also Bernd Schirok, "Menschenbild," *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Joachim Heinzle. Vol. I: *Autor, Werk, Wirkung* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 366–410; here 369–70.

their own lord would then desire to join King Arthur's court as well, and this to Perceval's mother's great misery and distress. And we should also not ignore Perceval's short comment to the knights, directing them to the site where the peasants are doing their work: "'Sir, look now at the tall trees you see on the ridge of that mountain. That is the Valdome Pass,' he said. . . . 'My mother's plowmen are there, plowing and harrowing her fields. If those people passed by there, the plowmen, if they saw them, will tell you'" (343).

The young man is thoroughly familiar with the entire region, knows exceedingly well where he can go hunting, where the fields are, who is working on them and when. Nevertheless, nothing holds him back, not even his mother's pleading. Irrespective of the report of his father's death as a result of his grief over the death of his two older sons, also in knightly combat, Perceval's only concern is to be knighted by King Arthur, and so he quickly leaves the forest refuge, disregarding even the drama of witnessing from the distance his mother collapsing upon his departure (347).

Rosemarie Deist recently made a truly insightful comment about the entire scene, which deserves to be quoted at length:

The forest proves to be "a cheerful agricultural idyll enhanced by the *locus amoenus* topos of the singing birds in spring" (307ff.). But this idyll is a cultural construction. In the tongue-in-cheek fashion so typical for this romance, the picture of bliss in the thicket pinpoints the irreconcilable conflict she is confronted with as a mother. The forest is an environment beyond the confines of the civic world. Lying outside of a common juridical sphere, it cannot be refined. The mother has made the deep woods a permanent exile for herself and her son, in which she can mourn for her other two sons, dead in knightly combat, her husband who died of grief, and the loss of all their possessions. Devastation brought upon by knighthood has made her what she presently is: mother to her last son and widow¹³⁴

Indeed, Deist is quite correct in her assessment, the forest has transformed into an exile, if not into a grave site from which the older generation can no longer escape, whereas the young man, because he is so naive and impetuous, frees himself radically, disregarding all of his mother's profound emotions. Not surprisingly, in the course of his experiences in the world of chivalry, Perceval causes many problems and transgresses many times, until he can finally be taught the right lessons and then become purified by his maternal uncle, who has also withdrawn into the forest to do penance for his family's tragic actions and to help them to redeem their sins through his prayers as an hermit. Deist deserves to be quoted once again to clarify this structural development: "In a linear progression, Perceval

¹³⁴ Rosemarie Deist, *Gender and Power: Counsellors and Their Masters in Antiquity and Medieval Courtly Romance*. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), 138–39.

moves from the forest of the mother at the beginning of the story to that of the maternal uncle at the end. By his counsel, the hermit joins the two forests and gives meaning to Perceval's narrative existence. In structural terms, his words are the final marker in Perceval's path leading back to the mother" (139).¹³⁵

Let us compare the forest episode in Chrétien's original version with the one developed by Wolfram von Eschenbach in his Middle High German romance, largely, but certainly not completely based on the French text.¹³⁶ Focusing on the description of the forest solitude will allow us to gain new insights into the difference between both romances, and will also shed new light on the awareness of rural space as projected by Wolfram. He offers considerably more introductory comments and explanations why Herzeloide, Parzival's mother, retires into that woody exile: "Her heart's sorrow was so entire that she had no interest in any garland, whether red or faded. To that place she took, seeking refuge, noble Gahmuret's son" (50). Herzeloide does not, however, simply withdraw into the forest; instead she takes all her workers with her and orders them to clear the land and to start farming, but this does not matter much in this context. As the narrator relates, she is primarily concerned that her young son will never hear a word about knighthood, so she instructs all the workers to watch their speech and to keep him in splendid isolation because she wants to protect Parizval at all costs from being drawn into the world of knighthood, which is fatally flawed, as she correctly perceives it.

The narrator, however, faults her for this pedagogical approach because she deprives Parzival of the necessary lessons about real life, prevents him from growing into adulthood, and hopes to keep him as a child, kind of substituting for her deceased husband — there is no mention of other children, which intensifies her maternal desire to protect her only son: "Thy boy was hidden thus, brought up in

¹³⁵ Peggy McCracken, "Mothers in the Grail Quest: Desire, Pleasure, and Conception," *Arthuriana* 8.1 (1998): 35-48; Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "Rewriting Chrétien's Conte du graal: Mothers and Sons: Questions, Contradictions, and Connections," *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting, and Transmission in the French Tradition: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at the Institute for Research in the Humanities, October 5-7 1995, the University of Wisconsin-Madison*, ed. Douglas Kelly. Faux Titre, 116 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), 213-44; Ewa Słojka, "Escape from Paradox: Perceval's Upbringing in the Conte du Graal," *Arthuriana* 18.4 (2008): 66-86.

¹³⁶ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival: Studienausgabe*. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann. Übersetzung von Peter Knecht. Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998); Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titirel*. Translated with Notes by Cyril Edwards. With an Introduction by Richard Barber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For an excellent introduction and in-depth analysis at the same time, see Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*. 8th, completely rev. ed. Sammlung Metzler, 36 (Stuttgart and Weimar: 2004). See also D. H. Green, *The Art of Recognition in Wolfram's Parzival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 60-77. For recent critical approaches, see the annual *Wolfram Studien*; and *A Companion to Wolfram's Parzival*, ed. Will Hastay. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999).

the Waste of Soltane, cheated of kingly ways, were it not for some sport—a bow and little bolts” (51). Nevertheless, as we learn from the text, Parzival proves to be a very sensitive and observant child, even though he continues to display a considerable degree of immaturity for a long time, even after his departure from Soltane. As scholars have noted many times, Parzival demonstrates great grief and pity for the dead birds that he himself had shot with his arrows: “Those he cut with his own hand and shot down many birds he found there. Yet whenever he shot a bird whose noise had been so loud with song before, he would weep and tear at himself, wreaking vengeance on his hair” (51).

Much later, once he has learned the fundamental lessons from his uncle Trevrizent, Parzival finally understands the tragedy that had befallen his entire family, yet he is then in good hands because Trevrizent assumes, at last, all his sins and atones for them on his behalf. Parzival originates, we might say, from the wild forest, and returns to that forest of his uncle’s abode to recover his true self and to prepare himself for his destiny, to assume the throne of the Grail kingdom.

In his early days, however, the birdsong brings tears to his eyes: “He was ignorant of anxiety, except for the birdsong above him—that sweetness pressed into his heart, stretching his little breasts” (52). Yet, when asked by his mother what caused his great sorrow, he cannot even tell what the true source might be, until she discovers one day how much that natural beauty overcomes him and exposes his soul to the great sorrow. Consequently she has her servants kill as many birds as they can catch, until Parzival realizes the great slaughter and intervenes, demonstrating remarkably well the true virtue of his soul. Not surprisingly, Herzeloyde immediately feels remorse, stops the killing, and kisses her son, admitting to herself: “Why do I contravene His commandment—He who is, after all, the Highest Good? Shall birds for my sake abandon joy?” (51).

The subsequent events with the knights, Parzival’s desire to learn everything about knighthood, his request from his mother to let him go to King Arthur, and her poor lessons are all more or less the same as in Chrétien’s version. Nevertheless, Wolfram continues to diverge from his source at many points of his narrative, and has the young hero not witness, for example, the collapse of his mother (55). Moreover, the impact of nature on this protagonist finds another powerful, though almost foolish example. Herzeloyde had given Parzival several pieces of advice before his departure, such as: “on untrodden roads you must avoid dark fords—those which are shallow and clear, there you must ride in boldly” (55). But when he arrives at a brook with no real water depth, he does not dare to cross it because of his mother’s recommendation, until he finds a “ford, clear and beautiful” (56).

As serendipity arranges it, however, this is the very spot where on the other side of the brook Orilus had pitched a tent for his wife Jeschute and himself, and here Parzival will commit his first major transgression against the lady, again following

but misunderstanding his mother's words vis-à-vis women he would encounter in the world. Although he is not raping Jeschute in the narrow sense of the word, his behavior causes a major disruption in her marriage, creates enormous pain on both sides, and bodes extremely badly for the protagonist's further development.¹³⁷

As both Chrétien and Wolfram signal through their presentation of the protagonist's youth, growing up without much guidance, mostly following just his own whims and interests, with his mother abandoned to her own grief over the loss of her husband and two other sons (Chrétien), the forest could be both a safe haven and a location of illusionary quality, that is, of self-deception. Both authors underscore how little the mother really lives up to her parental obligations and what the consequences are for Perceval/Parzival when he finally encounters people from outside and then ventures there himself.¹³⁸ Corpses are strewn where the young protagonist roams since he has never learned anything about proper behavior, social norms, ethics, and religion while he still lived in the forest.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Albrecht Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages: A Critical Discourse in Premodern German and European Literature*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 7 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 7–9, 21, 63, et passim.

¹³⁸ Clarissa W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); unfortunately, she does not engage with Chrétien or Wolfram at all. For a discussion of Parzival's mother, see Michael Dallapiazza, *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Parizval*. Klassiker-Lektüren, 12 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2009), 34–41. See also Marion E. Gibbs, "Ideals of Flesh and Blood: Women Characters in *Parzival*," *A Companion to Wolfram's Parzival*, ed. Will Hasty. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1999), 12–36. For older, yet still relevant research, particularly with a theological orientation regarding the mother figure, see G. Richard Dimler, S.J., "Parzival's Guilt: A Theological Interpretation," *Monatshefte* 62 (1970): 123–34; Maria Dorninger, "Aspekte der Mutter und Tochter-Beziehung in der mittelhochdeutschen Epik: Beobachtungen zu den Trojanerromanen Konrads von Würzburg und Herborts von Fritzlar und dem 'Willehalm' Wolframs von Eschenbach," *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Age*, ed. Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones. International Medieval Research, 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 157–80.

¹³⁹ Helmut Brackert, "'der lac an ritterscheft tôl': Parzival und das Leid der Frauen," *Ist zwîvel herzen nâchgebûr: Günther Schweikle zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Rüdiger Krüger, Jürgen Kühnel, and Joachim Kuolt. Helfant Studien, 5 (Stuttgart: Helfant, 1989), 143–63. For the importance of the family in Wolfram's thinking, see Sylvia Stevens, *Family in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Willehalm: mîner mâge triwe ist mir wol kuont*. Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature, 18 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 1997), 1–30.

13. Ominous Approaches: Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Titirel*: Seeking Refuge from Society in the Forest

Wolfram von Eschenbach also developed rather ambivalent images of the forest in his mysterious and fragmentary *Titirel* where the two very young lovers Sigûne and Schionatulander spend time in a forest idyll, with him fishing in a creek, while she is resting in a tent.¹⁴⁰ Suddenly a dog arrives who has escaped his lord while on pursuit of some animal prey. Schionatulander manages to catch the dog and brings it to his beloved, who immediately recognizes the magical nature of this animal because of the most fanciful leash on which the accounts of tragic lovers is written by means of gems embossed into the material. The dog, as is then revealed, carries the name "Gardevîaz" (148, 4), which means, as the narrator translates for us: "'Hüete der verte!'" (148, 4; Watch your way!). However, those lovers whose lives are described in the script written on the leash do not seem to have been considered and mature enough, so the men's wooing led to their death, and their mistresses subsequently died as well out of grief. The dog, however, was sent by a lady to her lover, the Duke Ehcunavert von Bluome diu wilde (of the wild flowers), and this love token is to be considered, reflecting on his name, a token of his wildness, or of the uncontrollable nature of love (158).

Sigûne is most anxious to read the whole story on the leash, probably because the sad account linking love with death deeply appeals to her, perhaps as a somber foreshadowing of her own destiny. The dog, feeling the loosening of leash, strains, and can free himself, so he continues his hunt according to his own nature. In her desperation, Sigûne tries to hold on to the leash, but the gems scratch through her palm and leave bloody traces (161, 167), which could be understood as a bloody script. Alerted by the loud disturbance, Schionatulander drops his angling gear and runs, with bare feet, after the dog, disregarding all the bushes and brambles surrounding their idyllic setting in the forest. When he returns, empty-handed, his feet and legs are all scratched and covered with wounds (166), another symbolic act of writing onto his body.

Both times the wilderness of nature, hence of love, has written itself onto these two lovers, who do not yet know what tragic fate will await them. They console each other, but she insists that he must recover the dog and hence the leash

¹⁴⁰ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titirel*. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und mit einem Stellenkommentar sowie einer Einführung versehen von Helmut Brackert und Stephan Fuchs-Jolie (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003); for critical studies on this most significant text, long ignored or little understood, see Albrecht Classen, *Utopie und Logos. Vier Studien zu Wolframs von Eschenbach "Titirel-Fragmenten"*. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990); Alexander Sager, Minne von maeren: *On Wolfram's "Titirel"*. Transatlantische Studien zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, 2 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2006).

because she must know the ending of the account that she had read on the leash. On that condition she would promise him all her love, but only once he would have completed that task. Tragically, however, as we know from Wolfram's earlier work, *Parzival*, young Schionatulander will find his death in this endeavor, being killed by the mighty Duke Orilus, husband of Jeschûte, whom young Parzival will, innocently, badly molest, which subsequently leads to many terrifying events in the Arthurian world, undermining many of its traditional values and questions its own ideological framework. As Wolfram indicates, the forest could be a safe haven, if not even an idyll, but the outside world was never far away and could easily embark on the utopian locus and threaten the peace and harmony which the individuals in there enjoy temporarily.

14. Nature and the Courtly World

Literary Reflections on Rural Space in High Medieval Literature

Even though we would like to determine with complete clarity the symbolic meaning of the forest in courtly romance, one specific interpretation cannot be given because each writer and each text identified the forest with different values and functions. Sometimes it is the space for robber knights and thieves; then it appears as the space where wild and ferocious animals roam and threaten the unexpected traveler's life; it could also be the space where the lovers retire into and rescue themselves from courtly persecutions, or where an individual protagonist finds rescue from unjust persecutions, such as in Adenet le Roi's *Li Roumans de Berte aus Grans piés* from 1273.¹⁴¹ Erec, in Chrétien's and in Hartmann's respective versions, seemingly dies in the forest after having rescued a fellow knight from the clutches of mean-spirited giants. His wife, Enite, believes so, at least, and begins a long mourning ritual at the end of which she intends to commit suicide, only to be prevented from hitting herself with Erec's sword in the last minute.¹⁴²

Wherever we turn, considering either romances or heroic epics, courtly poetry or allegorical romances, each time the forest with its dark and overgrown space can represent something different. As Corinne J. Saunders alerts us, "The forest may be identified, in structuralist terms, as one of the morphemes or deep

¹⁴¹ See Rosa A. Perez's contribution to this volume. Cf. also my discussion of the *Königin Sibille* novel below, as it has survived in Old Spanish, French, and Early Modern German.

¹⁴² *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, trans. with an introd. by David Staines (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1–86; esp. 57–59; *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson. Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 51–163; esp. 118–23.

structures of romance, yet its symbolism shifts and alters, functioning in complex and varying ways. It draws at the same time upon the contemporary reality of the actual forest and upon the universal or archetypal, thus both reflecting and reflecting upon the particular community of which it forms a part and upon the human psyche."¹⁴³

In this regard it behooves us to consider the complexity of all rural spaces, since they need to be treated first of all from a concrete, historical perspective, serving specific purposes for human society or representing a challenge, a hurdle, a barrier, or simply waste land. Then we have always to consider how much all rural space could comply with biblical images and thus convey religious metaphors, as we have already seen in the end part of Parzival's life, shortly before he can finally return to King Arthur's court and from there make his way back to Castle Munsalvaesche where the Grail is awaiting him. Then there is the forest as projected in the classical tradition, providing resources to build cities, such as in the *Roman d'Eneas*.

Moreover, the forest represents the mysterious and the mystical, since magicians, hermits, witches, and saints live in the dark areas, barely visible from the outside, yet exerting tremendous influence, as illustrated by the figure of Merlin. Saunders summarizes her analysis as follows: "The world of these forests is characterized by the universal romance themes of love, adventure, quest, enchantment and vision, and by their darker counterparts, rape, death, madness, imprisonment, penance, rendering the forest a specialized landscape just on the margins of human credibility, lingering somewhere between nightmare and wish-fulfillment."¹⁴⁴ The forest can be the central icon of a fairy-tale world, or it can be a symbol of tremendous force, reflecting an individual's sense of being lost in life, such as in Dante's *Divina Commedia*.¹⁴⁵ And the pilgrim traverses, as Aleksandr Dobrochotow has observed, on his way from Inferno through Purgatorio to Paradiso the various stages of human nature, ultimately reaching the height of all existence, the divine itself.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1993), xii.

¹⁴⁴ Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (see note 143), 205.

¹⁴⁵ Marianne Stauffer, *Der Wald: Zur Darstellung und Deutung der Natur im Mittelalter*. Studiorum Romanicorum Collectio Turicensis, X (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1959).

¹⁴⁶ Aleksandr Dobrochotow, "Der Mensch und die Natur im 'Fegefeuer' Dantes (Gesang XXX)," *Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter* (see note 84), vol. 2, 791–94. Cf. also the older, yet still valuable study by Oscar Kuhns, *The Treatment of Nature in Dante's Divina commedia* (1897; Port Washington, Kennikat Press, 1987); Patrick Boyde, *L'uomo nel cosmo: Filosofia della natura e poesia in Dante*. Collezione di testi e di studi. Linguistica e critica letteraria (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1984); Richard H. Lansing, *Dante and Pilosophy: Nature, the Cosmos, and the Ethical Imperative*. Dante, the Critical Complex, 3 (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

Whether medieval poets and romance authors had a clear awareness of rural space will always remain a matter of debate, but we can be certain that from early on they integrated a multiplicity of nature scenes into their works as essential backdrop to the central motifs or themes. There are many major topoi predicated on nature, and these are the landscape of paradise, the enclosed garden, and the landscape of the various seasons.

15. The Protagonist's Existential Test in Nature: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Another useful example proves to be the anonymous alliterative romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, composed sometime in the late fourteenth century.¹⁴⁷ As scholarship has already noted numerous times, the author's descriptive skills, his amazing ability to capture our attention through the presentation of countless details, and the highly dramatic plot development, beautifully coupled with the strong emphasis on rhetorical skills that really determine the outcome of Gawain's almost fatal challenge, mark this work as one of the great masterpieces of medieval literature.¹⁴⁸ Apart from the fact that the poet powerfully parallels the events in the forest outside of Castle Haut Desert, owned by Bercelak de Hautdesert, with those in Gawain's bedroom, where the lord's wife tries to seduce him, without achieving her goal, and this for three days, although Bercelak kills one symbolic animal after the other during his hunt, we discover another major episode focusing on the natural space.

Searching for the Green Chapel where he would encounter the Green Knight again whom he then would have to permit to decapitate him in return for what he himself had done to that mysterious figure one year earlier, Gawain traverses wide swaths of England while the winter weather is setting in and causing him many

¹⁴⁷ Here I will rely on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Dual-Language Version*, ed. and trans. by William Vantuono. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1265 (New York and London: Garland, 1991); now see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: An Authoritative Translation, Contexts, Criticism*, trans. Marie Borroff; ed. by Marie Borroff and Laura L. Howes. Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010). I also find the translation by Joseph Glaser very sympathetic: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, trans., with notes, by Joseph Glaser. Introduction by Christine Chism (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011). See also *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Sources and Analogues*, compiled by Elisabeth Brewer. Arthurian Studies, 27. 2nd ed. (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1992). The number of critical studies on this text is, of course, legion.

¹⁴⁸ J. J. Anderson, *Language and Imagination in the Gawain-Poems*. Manchester Medieval Literature (Manchester, UK, and New York: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2005). See also the contributions to *Gawain: A Casebook*, ed. Raymond H. Thompson and Keith Busby. Arthurian Characters and Themes, 8 (New York: Routledge, 2006).

problems. The poet primarily presents him as the typical courtly knight on a quest, all by himself, riding through the wilderness, threatened everywhere by creatures, evil figures, and the inclement weather: "Strange roads the knight did range, / With perilous paths in between; / His mood quite often did change / Before that chapel was seen" (709–12). Gawain climbs on many cliffs to gain a lookout (713), he has to wade through many rivers (715), and also clashes with numerous enemies somewhere in the mountains: "So many marvels in the mountains does the man find" (718). However, the poet refrains from going into further details and contents himself with stressing how fearsome the protagonist's experiences were wherever he went.

Although the narrator projects a dangerous world outside of the court populated by trolls and monsters, all of them hostile by nature toward the courtly hero, he still reveals a profound interest in what nature does, even in the night of winter: "Had he not been strong and steadfast, and served the Lord, / Doubtlessly he would have died, dropped down on the earth. / If the warring was nerve-wracking that winter was worse, / When the cold clear water scattered from the clouds, / And froze before it fell on the faded earth" (724–28).

Insofar as Gawain believes that he is approaching his own death, it is most fitting that nature also reflects its own death, or winter.¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, things seem to get really bad, and there would be good reason for Gawain to despair because both weather and the natural environment turn from bad to worse: "By a mount in the morning the good man then rides / Into a forest full deep, fantastic and wild, / High hills on each side, and heavy woods beneath / With bare oaks, very huge, a hundred together. / The hazel and the hawthorn were thickly ensnarled, / With rough, ragged moss arrayed everywhere, / With many birds, not blitheful, upon bare twigs, / That piteously piped there in pain from the cold" (740–47). Gawain has almost given up any hope of finding a safe location to celebrate the Christmas season, when he suddenly espies a castle, where, unbeknownst to him so far, his greatest challenge will await him. However, this castle, Hautdesert, at least provides him with shelter and protection from the biting cold. Since his goal appears only after he crosses himself thrice, the landscape is often considered a part of a Christian allegory.

The rest of the narrative does not need to be discussed further; it is enough to realize how much the poet predicated his narrative presentation on referring to cold nature, on the virtually dead landscape, and on the fearsome forest. Without that incredible challenge in the outdoors, Gawain would not have grasped the significance of his next stage in his quest, and he would not have felt the gratitude

¹⁴⁹ Albrecht Classen, "Winter as a Phenomenon in Medieval Literature: A Transgression of the Traditional Chronotopos?," to appear in *Mediävistik*.

that subsequently leads him to obey most meticulously the laws of guests and their hosts.

Whatever Bercilak's wife will then try to achieve, she can never seduce the noble knight because he has already gone through the first stage of his catharsis, and having survived the terrible winter landscape, his own soul and character have proven to be worthy for the next challenge, which takes place at court, at the center of courtly society. Nevertheless, Gawain still has to find the Green Chapel, where his ultimate challenge rests. But that is not an easy goal, despite the clear direction. First, the servant tempts him to abandon that challenge, and then Gawain continues on his individual quest, though he has a hard time recognizing the chapel. His ultimate goal proves to be the chapel, but that in itself turns out to be an icon of his own honor, as impressive and realistic as the description of the natural setting might be: "He saw no such thing on any side—and it seemed strange to him — / Save, a short distance into the glade, a dreary mound, / A round barrow on a slope beside the bank, / By the brook bubbled therein as if it had boiled" (2170–74). Although it is an old chapel, Gawain realizes how much the existential threat has to be faced in nature, so not at court as one year ago. For the poet, then, particularly because the protagonist survives the challenge, of course, positioning his hero in this life-threatening situation right next to the Green Chapel signals that life cannot be simply subdued and destroyed, just because of a silly game with the Green Knight, Bercilak de Hautdesert, or, as he later admits, with Morgan le Fay (2446).

As much as Gawain's subsequent experiences correlate him once again with King Arthur and the world of the court, we can now affirm the extent to which the natural environment, the forest, or any other wild setting represent the stage where human life really faces its fundamental challenge and can live out to its fullest. What *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* signals, then, is the realization of how much human life depends not only on the successful enactment of political goals in the sphere of the court, but also on the understanding of human life within the natural context.

16. Love (?) in the Mountains: Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* Late-Medieval Spanish Reflections on Rural Space

Let us also consider one of the most famous late-medieval Spanish examples, Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*, a certainly odd, dialectical, deliberately contradictory treatise from the middle of the fourteenth century that has elicited a plethora of

scholarly responses.¹⁵⁰ The rich fabric of moral, ethical, religious, but then also humorous, and satirical teachings does not need to be discussed here, especially since there is so much research on this work.¹⁵¹ As to be expected, Ruiz offers extensive discussions about the Seven Deadly Sins, mixes in numerous didactic fables, but then he also offers contradictory comments about love, and so forces us to read his treatise most carefully, which deliberately blurs the distinctions between the serious and the facetious.¹⁵²

After many debates about and examinations of all kinds of erotic settings and conditions, the narrative figure also turns toward the mountains to find love, although he admits himself right at the beginning that this was a foolish enterprise. Since the author wants to situate the protagonist in a miserable situation from which only a rough mountain woman would be capable of rescuing him, he utilizes, as the time framework, fall or even winter: "I had nowhere to hide from the hail and snow" (951, 3).¹⁵³ Once he has crossed the mountain pass, barely

¹⁵⁰ Juan Ruiz, *The Book of Good Love*, trans. by Elizabeth Drayson Macdonald, consultant ed. Melveena McKendrick. The Everyman Library (London: J. M. Dent; Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1999); see also Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez, *The Allegory of Good Love: Parodic Perspectivism in the Libro de buen amor*. University of California Publications in Modern Philology 112 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); *A Companion to the Libro de buen amor*, ed. Louise M. Haywood and Louise O. Vasvári. Colección Tàmesis. Serie A, Monografías, 209 (Rochester, NY: Tamesis, 2004); Thomas R. Hart, *Allegory and Other Matters in the Libro de buen amor*. Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, 58 (London: Dept. of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2007); José Luis Pérez López, *Temas del Libro de buen amor (el entorno catedralicio toledano)* (Toledo: D. B. Comunicación, 2007); *El "libro de buen amor": texto y contextos*, ed. Guillermo Serés, Daniel Rico y Omar Sanz, Federica Accorsi, et al. (Bellaterra: Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona, Centro de Estudios e Investigación de Humanidades, 2008). For our purposes, see, above all, Gail Phillips, *The Imagery of the Libro de buen amor*. Spanish Series (Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 9 (Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1983); most recently, see Devid Paolini, "El libro de buen amor y el amor descortés," *Actas del XVI Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas: Nuevos caminos del hispanismo . . .*, París, del 9 al 13 de julio de 2007, ed. Pierre Civil and Françoise Crémoux (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt a. M.: Vervuert; 2010), no pagination.

¹⁵¹ Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic, and the Poetics of Didacticism*. *Figurae*. Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 116–17, 122–29, 135–40, et passim.

¹⁵² The classical study on this topic continues to be Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (see note 81), 417–35. See now the contributions to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

¹⁵³ Albrecht Classen, "Winter as a Phenomenon" (see note 149). A wonderful example, very unusual for Arthurian romances, proves to be the romance *Diu Crône* by the Austrian poet Heinrich von dem Türlin (middle of the thirteenth century), which I discuss there in greater detail. See also Milène Wegmann, *Naturwahrnehmung im Mittelalter im Spiegel der lateinischen Historiographie des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*. *Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters*, 40 (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

alive, he encounters the cowgirl, the “vaquerisa” (952, 2), who rescues him and takes him to her abode, carrying him on her own shoulders, after he had promised her “a pendant and a brooch, and a rabbit-skin bag” (957, 4). Only in this rough terrain would it be possible for a radical reversal of gender roles: “I didn’t mind that she carried me on her back; / she saved me from crossing streams and hillocks” (958, 2–3). But first she treated him almost violently, subduing all his resistance: “She threw her crook at me, / twirled around her sling / and fired a stone at me” (965, 3–5), being a veritable Brünhild in the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200).¹⁵⁴ In the subsequent section, which details the events of their exchange, we are told the following:

Tomome Resio por la mano, en su pescueço puso
 commo a çuron lyuiano e leuon la cuesta ayusso:
 ‘hadre duro, non te espantes, que byen te dare que yantes,
 commo es de la sierra vso.’ (967)

[She grabbed me quickly by the hand,
 flung me round her neck
 as if I were a little shepherd’s pouch
 and carried me down the hill on her shoulders.
 ‘Don’t be alarmed, you wally,

I’ll satisfy your appetite,
 as we do up in the mountains.’]

After she has nourished him in her hut, finally a place of warm shelter, she begins a sexual affair with him, although it is not clear at all whether he truly agreed to it or not. Would we perhaps even have to assume that she might rape him, and not the other way around? Subsequently the narrative includes further encounters with some of these mountain girls, or *serranas*, and each time there is a sexual element, insofar as the protagonist is on a search for love in the traditional sense of the term and now undergoes a transgressive experience, vulgar and raw, especially because it takes place in the mountains with a representative of the rural population. Sometimes the wild woman is the active partner, but sometimes the man seduces her, pretending to be an attractive partner who would know well

¹⁵⁴ Connie L. Scarborough, “The Rape of Men and Other ‘Lessons’ about Sex in the *Libro de buen amor*,” *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 565–77; for the German tradition of the ‘wild woman,’ see Christa Habiger-Tuczay, “Wilde Frau,” *Dämonen, Monster, Fabelwesen*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich. Mittelalter Mythen, 2 (St. Gallen: UVK, Fachverlag für Wissenschaft und Studium, 1999), 603–15; Justin Vollmann, “Wolfdietrich und die Wilden Frauen,” *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 14 (2003–2004): 243–54.

how to do all the various labors that are necessary on a farm and in the woods: "I'm an expert at driving cows / and can tame a fierce young bull. / I know how to churn milk and make cream, / and how to make a goatskin churning bag. / I can make a pair of twine sandals, / play the shepherd's pipes, / and ride a lively colt" (1000).

Quite naturally, here we recognize the tradition of the *pastourelle*, drastically satirized, but surprisingly contrasted with this new, completely uncourtly situation, high up in the inhospitable wilderness, that is, not even on a farm, on a pasture, or at the edge of the wood. While in medieval courtly poetry we commonly discover references to a peasant woman, a shepherdess, or a farm maid, they normally operate in a friendly, shy, or accommodating fashion. By contrast, here in Ruiz's satirical treatise on love, she assumes monstrous features and assumes complete control in their tryst. Moreover, we find the protagonist not on an ordinary farm, or in the fields, but in a life-threatening context, the mountains where hail and storm pummel the poor man mercilessly. Only the woman's robust treatment, warming him up, feeding him, make it possible for him to revive, which then makes possible their sexual exchanges.

As Connie L. Scarborough has accurately observed behind the satirical screen, "The *serranas* thus manifest not only male fears about the sexual aggressiveness of women but also serve as what Dagenais calls lessons in 'practical wisdom.' For a society which perceived male sexual aggression and imposition as a norm, the *Libro de buen amor* reminds men that they are vulnerable too. The *serranas* constitute an alternative, matriarchal society in which women not only control the choice of sexual partner but may even force their sexual attentions on unwilling male victims."¹⁵⁵

In addition, the 'wild woman' was commonly matched by the 'wild man,' an iconographic image that was actually even more popular throughout the early modern age, if we consider the wealth of sculptures, carvings, and painted images. As Roger Bartra comments,

The identity of the "civilized" has always been flanked by the image of the Other, yet the common image of the Other as a wild and barbaric figure, as opposed to Western man, has been considered a reflection—albeit distorted—of non-Western peoples, a eurocentric expression of colonial expansion from which evolved an exotic and racist version of those whom the conquistadors and colonizers had discovered and subdued. . . . wild men were a European invention, essentially conforming to the inner nature of Western culture. More to the point, the wild man and the European are one and the same, and the notion of barbarism was applied to non-European peoples as the transposition of a perfectly structured myth with a character that can only be

¹⁵⁵ Scarborough, "The Rape of Men" (see note 154), 576.

understood within the context of Western cultural evolution. The myth of the wild man is an original and basic ingredient of European culture.¹⁵⁶

The highly popular myth of the 'wild man/woman,' together with the folkloric motif of the 'green man' and other figures depicted in sculptures and images all over Europe during the Middle Ages and beyond, reflect the deep fascination with the question what constitutes human nature, and where the boundaries lie that demarcate civilization from wilderness. As playful as those images or motifs in specific literary texts might be, they powerfully underscore the great need for people to understand the distinctiveness of human identity in contrast to animals or plants. As Timothy Husband emphasizes, "Sublimated in the wild man were the preeminent phobias of medieval society — chaos, insanity, and ungodliness."¹⁵⁷

At the same time, as Stephanie Leitch now argues, in the early modern age the wild man iconography could serve surprisingly well to propagate a form of primitivism underlying, or promoting, a burgeoning German nationalism, for instance: "the rediscovery in Germany (c. 173) of Tacitus' first-century *Germania* transformed the wild man of lore into the historical *ur*-German, described in the ancient Latin texts and gave him a national identity."¹⁵⁸ But Leitch hastens to add: "As soon as the mold for this national character was set, its shape was threatened by a new wild man, the Amerindian. Nevertheless, the Humanists in Germany made great efforts to idealize the rustic figure of the 'wild man' who used to be unspoiled by civilization and still embodied the natural, original, hence powerful and tenacious strengths of the Germanic race in ancient times."¹⁵⁹

Rural space, including the forest, the mountain, and the isolated island, proves to be, here in Ruiz's facetious, aporic, and deliberately confounding treatise on love, and equally in many other contexts, the unexpected realm of freedom from social

¹⁵⁶ Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, trans. by Carl T. Berrisford (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 3–5.

¹⁵⁷ Timothy Husband, *Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 5.

¹⁵⁸ Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture*. History of Text Technologies (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37.

¹⁵⁹ Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography* (see note 158), 45–46. See also her concluding remarks, 62: "Humanist engagement with the cultural profile of the wild man led sixteenth-century German, with the help of Tacitus, to see the wild man first in themselves, and then, in the Indian. Independent from the texts they accompanied, the visual tradition of the wild man informed the interpretation of newly discovered races. Recognizing themselves as wild things awaiting rehabilitation prompted the need to take a closer and more critical look at newly discovered inhabitants of foreign lands." We can draw the consequence from her observations that rural space consistently served as a topographical terrain where ideologized images of origin, identity, and culture could be drawn from.

constraints and standards, and it might even emerge as a world of topsy-turvydom where traditional gender roles no longer can be maintained or are at least threatened. Alternatively, as this text and a multitude of others indicate, narrative locations in the countryside, far away from court, or the city, opened numerous perspectives for innovative strategies and reflections. Rural space could thus be both appealing and threatening, fascinating and inimical. We can be certain that medieval poets and artists happily explored this uncontrollable or uncontrolled space in order to develop new social relationships and opportunities for their protagonists.¹⁶⁰

Moreover, resorting to the mountain setting with the wild *serranas* freed the poet from engaging with peasants, whose appearance on the literary stage had always created an awkward situation, since then a noble character had significant and meaningful interactions with a member of the class of farmers.¹⁶¹

17. Rural Space in Late-Medieval Short Verse Narratives

Rural figures appear quite prominently in late-medieval verse narratives only when satire was the *modus operandi*, as we commonly notice in the many important collections of verse narratives and subsequently prose jest narratives, a genre that experienced, since its beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (*fabliaux*), an ever growing popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (*tales*, *mæren*, *novelle*, *fascetiae*, *Schwänke*, *cuentos*, etc.).¹⁶² Geoffrey Chaucer takes his readers

¹⁶⁰ This is beautifully argued by Christopher R. Clason in his contribution to this volume.

¹⁶¹ See the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen ("Utopian Space in the Countryside"). If an aristocrat enters a close or even intimate relationship with a female peasant, the narrative commonly requires extensive explanations and then depend on highly usual circumstances, probably to overcome criticism by the aristocratic audiences. The songs by the thirteenth-century Austrian-Bavarian poet Neidhart illustrate the difficulties that the theme engendered, since his Summer songs reflect mostly a pompous and arrogant knightly lover, whose sexual potency even attracts old mothers, while his Winter songs present the same knight's economic poverty and inability to maintain the traditional power relationship, since he is obviously losing out against the rich village lads. See Albrecht Classen, "The Ultimate Transgression of the Courtly World" (see note 117); Gertrud Blaschitz, "Leben im ländlichen Raum im Lichte österreichischer spätmittelalterlicher Literatur: Infrastruktur im Neidhart-Oeuvre, im Helmbrecht des Wernher der Gärtner, im Pfaffen von Kahlenberg und in Strickermären," *Beiträge zur Mittelalterarchäologie in Österreich* 25 (2009): 213–14.

¹⁶² The number of critical studies on these genres is legion by now; see, for instance, *Comic Provocations: Exposing the Corpus of Old French Fabliaux*, ed. Holly A. Crocker. Foreword by R. Howard Bloch. Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Culture (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Märe – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006); *Mittelalterliche Novellistik im europäischen Kontext: Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, ed. Mark Chinca, Timo Reuvekamp-Felber, and Christopher Young. Beihefte zur

several times out of the city or the court into the countryside where hilarious situations of deception and counter-deception occur, such as in *The Reeve's Tale* (contained in his *Canterbury Tales*, ca. 1400), where the crucial events take place south of Cambridge in the little village of Trumpington, which still exists today. Although one of the main protagonists, the miller, belongs to the prosperous class within the village community, the narrative is still situated squarely in the rural space: "At Trumpyngton, nat fer fro Cantebrigge, / Ther gooth a brook and over that a brigge, / Upon the which brook there stant a melle. / Ant his is verray sooth that I yow telle. / A miller was ther dwellynge many a day" (3921–25).¹⁶³ However, although Chaucer turns his attention mostly to the world of the middle class, to the clergy, the rich merchants, he normally avoided dealing with rural space more explicitly. To be sure, among his pilgrims there are no peasants or other members of the village community telling tales. Nevertheless, the Yeman and the Plowman

Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, 13 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006). I leave aside older research on the *mære* because it does not critically pertain to the issue discussed here; but see the fundamental work by Ingrid Strasser, *Vornovellistisches Erzählen: Mittelhochdeutsche Mären bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts und altfranzösische Fabliaux*. *Philologica Germanica*, 10 (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1989); Hanns Fischer, *Studien zur deutschen Märendichtung*. 2nd, revised and expanded ed. prepared by Johannes Janota (1968; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983); Karl-Heinz Schirmer, *Stil- und Motivuntersuchungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Versnovelle*. *Hermaea. Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge*, 26 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969); Hans-Joachim Ziegeler, *Erzählen im Spätmittelalter: Mären im Kontext von Minnereden, Bispeln und Romanen*. *Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 87 (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1985). For the dissemination and manuscript traditions of *mæren*, see Arend Mihm, *Überlieferung und Verbreitung der Märendichtung im Spätmittelalter*. *Germanistische Bibliothek: Untersuchungen und Einzeldarstellungen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1967). *The Old French Fabliaux: Essays on Comedy and Context*, ed. Kristin L. Burr, John F. Moran, and Norris J. Lacy (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2007); see also the anthology *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany*. Selected and trans. by Albrecht Classen. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 328 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009). The major new contribution by Johannes Klaus Kipf, *cluoqe geschichten: Humanistische Fazetienliteratur im deutschen Sprachraum*. *Literaturen und Künste der Vormoderne*, 2 (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 2010), promises to be the decisive reference work for this genre in the late Middle Ages and in the time of Humanism. See also Robert J. Clements and Joseph Gibaldi, *Anatomy of the Novella: The European Tale Collection from Boccaccio and Chaucer to Cervantes* (New York: New York University Press, 1977); Philippe Ménard, *Les fabliaux: Contes à rire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983); *The Italian Novella: A Book of Essays*, ed. Gloria Allaire (New York and London: Routledge, 2003). For the specificity of rural space in the *fabliaux*, see the contribution to this volume by Sarah Gordon.

¹⁶³ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada; Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2008). For the background and literary-historical references, see *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, 2 vols., ed. Robert M. Correal and Mary Hamel. *Chaucer Studies*, 28, 35 (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2002–2005). See also J. A. W. Bennett, *Chaucer at Oxford and at Cambridge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). Again, this is such a well-known text, often studied and interpreted, that we do not need to list all the major studies.

are fully described in the General Prologue. The Yeman is said to be a “forster” (117) and can be identified as a small landholder or tenant farmer. While the Parson is said to live in a town but he travels widely in the country to help his parishioners, choosing not to go to London to make money, and his brother, the Plowman, is idealized as the good peasant. The relevant passage about the peasant deserves to be quoted in full:

With hym ther was a Plowman, was his brother,
That haddy ylad of dong fol many a fother.
A trewe swynkere and a good was he.
Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hoole herte
At alle tymes, thogh he gamed or smerte.
And thanne his neighebore right as hymselfe.
He wolde thresshe and therto dyke and delve
For Christes sake for every povre ight
Withouten hire if it lay in his myght.
His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel (529–40)

As we will observe at the end of this Introduction, this conforms to a generally growing respect for the farmer around the turn of the century, both in England and on the continent, if we consider a variety of literary witnesses, without disregarding the general sarcasm regarding the lower classes at the same time.

18. The Court, the City, and the Rural Space in Boccaccio's *Decameron*

Not similar to what was said about Chaucer, Giovanni Boccaccio was not shy about turning his narrative attention to rural settings, at times even to rich farmers, as in the eighth tale of the third day, where we are supposed to laugh about the foolish behavior of the rich farmer Ferondo, whom an abbot can deceive badly and thus blind him to the fact that he is sleeping with his wife.¹⁶⁴ The tenth tale of the fifth day incorporates some features of a rural existence (chicken coop), but it is otherwise situated in the city. In the tenth tale of the sixth day we encounter the Friar Cipolla who successfully manipulates the peasants in his church, making them believe any miracle story that he might tell them. In the sixth tale of the

¹⁶⁴ For a more in-depth analysis of rural space in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, see the contribution to this volume by Nicolino Applauso. He also observes that the figure of Griselda represents the tradition of approaching rural space and rustics in medieval literature from a positive perspective.

eighth day a simpleton in Florence, Calandrino, who also owns a farm outside of the city which his wife had brought into their marriage as her dowry, is badly fooled by his friends.

But the only time we encounter a truly positive, if not ideal, image of the peasant world occurs in the very last story, the tenth on the tenth day, in which most famously the Marquess of Saluzzo, Gualtieri, marries the humble but most virtuous daughter of a poor farmer, Griselda. Throughout many years of their marriage he terribly abuses her, always in the name of testing her trustworthiness and virtuosity, at the end even pretending to expel her as his wife and to marry another woman. But then he reveals in the last moment that this new woman is their mutual daughter, and that Griselda has proven to be his worthy and honorable wife, having demonstrated endless patience and submissiveness.

As much as scholars have debated the proper interpretation of this most complex figure, whose mistreatment aroused deep conflicts already in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, we only need to pay attention to the fact that she originates from the peasant class, represents rural space, that is, the simple and pure world outside of the city and the court, and most impressively emerges as the highly admirable counter-figure who puts to shame her brutal and highly unsympathetic husband.¹⁶⁵ In many ways we recognize in her a parallel figure to the peasant maid in Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich* and in the anonymous tale *Dis ist von dem heslin*, not to forget the account of Griselda in Chaucer's *The Clerk's Tale*.¹⁶⁶ This comparison, however, also demonstrates that none of these three women represents a completely perfect figure, standing in for the idyllic nature of the rural peasantry. Naivité, ignorance, and excessive submissiveness, hence lack of individuality and strength of character can also be observed, causing us to be a bit wary about how to interpret these peasant women.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ *Decameron*, a cura di Vittore Branca. Nuova ed. con xilografie tratte dalla prima stampa illustrata (1492) (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965); Marilyn Migiel, *A Rhetoric of the Decameron* (Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 116, 138, 141–46. For a most fascinating philosophical interpretation, see Kurt Flasch, *Vernunft und Vergnügen: Liebesgeschichten aus dem Decameron* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002), 207–68; see also the contributions to *La storia di Griselda in Europa: (atti del Convegno: Modi dell'intertestualità: la storia di Griselda in Europa, L'Aquila, 12-14 maggio 1988)*, a cura di Raffaele Morabito (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1990). For a good summary of the complex history of Griselda research, see Judith Bronfman, "Griselda," *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis. Vol. 1 (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 376–82.

¹⁶⁶ See the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen ("Utopian Space in the Countryside").

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Klinkert, "Die italienische Griselda-Rezeption im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert," *Die deutsche Griselda: Transformationen einer literarischen Figuration von Boccaccio bis zur Moderne*, ed. Achim Aurnhammer and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 55–72.

19. William Langland's *Piers the Plowman*: Late-Medieval English Religious and Social Reflections

One of the most impressive examples of allegorical literature in which the peasant world surfaces during the Middle Ages proves to be William Langland's famous *Piers the Plowman*, composed sometime in the late fourteenth century.¹⁶⁸ In essence, Langland intends to write a critique of his time, primarily in moral, ethical, and religious terms, which conforms to a large extent to parallel didactic texts composed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁶⁹ Intriguingly, however, Langland fleshes out the allegorical dimension with numerous historical and cultural references, which allow us to glean much information, indeed, about how the rural population was generally viewed in fourteenth-century England.¹⁷⁰

Particularly because Langland does not seem to have embraced the poor population in particular, and does not necessarily serve as their spokesperson, but instead aims at global moral and ethical education with his text, the evidence that we can glean from his work regarding the relevance of rural space, hence of the rural population, carries great weight. Before we turn to the relevant passages important for us, let us first gain a quick understanding of the special topics pursued.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ William Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, trans. into modern English with an introduction by J. F. Goodridge (1959; Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1968). See also the very user-friendly edition: William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, a new annotated edition of the C-text by Derek Pearsall. Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (1978; Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2007). See also William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (vol. 1: London and New York: Longman, 1995; vol. 2: Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008). For consistency's sake, I will always refer to *Plowman*.

¹⁶⁹ Russell Poole, "Didactic and Gnostic Literature," *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1750–55.

¹⁷⁰ Attempts to identify this texts as a mirror of social and economic issues in the late fourteenth century are, to say the least, a bit problematic; see, for instance, Robin Lister, "The Peasants of *Piers Plowman* and Its Audience," *Peasants and Countrymen in Literature*, ed. Kathleen Parkinson and Martin Priestman (London: Roehampton Institute, 1982), 71–90; Anne Hudson, "Piers Plowman and the Peasants' Revolt: A Problem Revisited," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1995): 85–106; Andrew Galloway, "Making History Legal: *Piers Plowman* and the Rebels of Fourteenth-Century England," *William Langland's Piers Plowman: A Book of Essays*, ed. Kathleen M. Hewett-Smit (New York: Routledge, 2001), 7–39; James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-Text*. 2nd ed. (1990; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007).

¹⁷¹ For a nice summary and concise introduction, see Jay Ruud, "Langland, William," *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature*, ed. id. (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 387–88. See also *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. John A. Alford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); James Francis Rhodes, *Poetry Does Theology: Chaucer, Grosseteste, and the Pearl-Poet* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); William Elford Rogers, *Interpretation in Piers Plowman* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002); C. David Benson, *Public Piers Plowman: Modern Scholarship and Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University

Langland utilizes the allegorical mode to criticize people in their moral and ethical failures. The workings of the Seven Deadly Sins are to be witnessed everywhere, both within and outside of the church.¹⁷² Neither clerics nor lay people can any longer be trusted to maintain standards of behavior, which he expresses with the illuminating metaphor of the fake metal, or the coin of poor alloy, which seems to be shiny and valuable on the outside, in reality, however, reveals itself to be a poor mixture and actually a deception: "But today there is a great flaw in those who guard the Church, so the layfolk waver and are feeble in faith. For coins that are false may look like sterling and be stamped with the king's stamp, yet they contain a base alloy and their metal is defective. And many men are like that nowadays—they are well-spoken, they wear the tonsure and have received the sign of the King of Heaven in Baptism, yet the metal of their souls is foully debased by sin. And this false alloy is found in clergy and lay men alike, for it seems that no man loves either God or his neighbour" (189).

Similarly, Langland bitterly complains about the failings in all education because not even the school masters and professors of divinity live up to the general expectations (190). He is also deeply concerned with recovering the virtue of charity and faith, he fights against corruption and bribery, promotes reason and conscience, and insists on the supreme importance of hope in the Christian sense. Ultimately, Langland writes a kind of sermon, ending with the warnings about the coming of the Apocalypse, accelerated by people's massive shortcomings and failures.

Then, however, in the autobiographical passage from the C-Text, where the allegorical figure of Reason chastises him for not working and making his own living, the poet includes many references to the world of the farmers and their many different labors. First Reason admonishes him that at least he could serve at Mass or join the choir to be useful in the administrative part of the Church. Then she turns to the duties of the farmers: "'or rake the corn for the harvesters, or help them to mow and stack it, or bind up the sheaves? Or why don't you get up early and join the reapers or find yourself a job as a head-reaper or a hayward, and stand with a horn in your hand, and sleep out at night to guard the corn in my fields from thieves and pilferers? Or why couldn't you cobble shoes, or watch the sheep or the pigs, or get some hedging or harrowing done, or drive the hogs and

Press, 2004); James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*. 2nd rev. ed. Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (1990; Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2007).

¹⁷² See the contributions to *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals*, ed. Richard Newhauser. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 123 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007).

geese to market. At all events you ought to do *something* that's useful to the community, and play your part in feeding the old and infirm'" (257).¹⁷³

In order to illustrate how the ordinary, lower class people earn their living, Reason mentions a whole litany of activities that have to be carried out on a farm, and thereby provides a good mirror of the actual conditions poor people were suffering from.¹⁷⁴ She regards those activities as worthy and noble by themselves because they prevent the people from turning to begging or stealing. There is no shame or lack of dignity in guarding farm animals, or regarding working in the fields either in Spring helping with the sowing, or in Fall, joining in the harvesting. Langland certainly evokes the typology of images used in medieval calendars, especially those forming an essential part of *Books of Hours*. For him, farm work proves to be as noble and dignifying as any other activity in human society, and in the face of God no one would be able to rely on his/her social status here in this life all by him- or herself.¹⁷⁵

The narrative figure Langland defends himself against Reason, pointing out that he had received the financial means in his youth to attend school and to acquire those skills necessary to serve as a cleric in the Church (258). For him it would not be right to be forced to do manual labor after such a long time of studying. Replicating the traditional medieval perception of the social classes, Langland argues against Reason, quieting her voice altogether by emphasizing: "'So a cleric's duty is to serve Christ, and leave carting and labouring to ignorant serfs. And no one should take Holy Orders unless he comes from a family of freemen, and his parents are married in church. Serfs and beggar's children and bastards should toil with their hands, while men of noble blood should serve God and their fellowmen as befits their rank—some by singing Masses, and others by book-keeping and advising men how to spend their money'" (258).

¹⁷³ There is a huge debate that has continued for many decades as to the proper evaluation of the manuscript transmission; see now Lawrence Warner, *The Lost History of "Piers Plowman": The Earliest Transmission of Langland's Work*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). See also Justine Rydzeski, *Radical Nostalgia in the Age of Piers Plowman: Economics, Apocalypticism, and Discontent*. Studies in the Humanities: Literature—Politics—Society, 48 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 1999); William Elford Rogers, *Interpretation in Piers Plowman* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002).

¹⁷⁴ Anne M. Scott, *Piers Plowman and the Poor* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004); she outlines the various types of economic and then also spiritual poverty as reflected in Langland's romance. She emphasizes that the "poem is an expression of late medieval political and social order; it does not propose a levelling of the estates, for such a lack of order, to the medieval mind, is a characteristic of hell where there is no order. What it does promote is the just organization of political and social order, in which 'mesure' is the principle and waste is eliminated" (231).

¹⁷⁵ Christina van Nolcken, "Piers Plowman, the Wycliffites, and Pierce the Plowman's Creed," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988): 71–102.

Unfortunately, however, things are no longer the way they used to be, which gives him reason to complain bitterly about the many examples of simony and corruption destroying the basis of the medieval social order, since nobility and the clergy are no longer regarded as significant and are hence not treated with the expected or desired respect. He concludes with a final dream in which he sees Reason serving as pope and Conscience as the pope's crosier-bearer. In other words, Langland does not want to revolutionize his world, the very opposite is the case. His conservatism is directed against the collapse of morality, ethics, and conscience. For him neither the clergy nor the nobles have preserved their traditional ideals, and new people from below have risen to higher rank, destabilizing the entire system—an approach pursued by a social critic very typical of the late Middle Ages.¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, here again we observe his great attention to realistic aspects reflecting the lives of the rural population. Langland never hesitates to depict in concrete terms what kind of work they are doing, what jobs are necessary on a farm, and so he indirectly praises the farm hands and maids, and then also their masters, for abiding by their traditional roles as prescribed by God. Of course, this does not mean that the poet would have idealized the farmers at large; he only demonstrated that he cared enough about them to incorporate aspects from their existence to illustrate special conditions which a cleric faced. But he clearly demarcated the three social classes and outlined unmistakably what their assignments and responsibilities were for feudal society to function as in the past.¹⁷⁷ Langland, like many other didactic writers of his time, emphasized the great need to reject indolence and to put all efforts in to do the necessary work that would help society to achieve its ultimate goals, as outlined by God's own designs.¹⁷⁸

After all, none of his ideals would function properly if the king, or Reason, would not step in when a transgression occurred or if individuals started to behave criminally against the people on the lower social levels. Langland's *Piers the Plowman* proves to be so valuable for our purposes particularly because it does not intend to portray a realistic scenario; instead it is undoubtedly a strongly allegorical text about the Christian world-view, here portrayed through the lens

¹⁷⁶ For further comments on this important aspect, see the contribution to this volume by Daniel F. Pigg. Cf. also Gregory M. Sadlek, *Idleness Working: The Discourse of Love's Labor from Ovid Through Chaucer and Gower* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 185–86, 212, 257–58.

¹⁷⁷ Gerald R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters & of the English People*. 2nd ed. (1933; Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), 568–69.

¹⁷⁸ Sadlek, *Idleness Working* (see note 176), 186, refers, for example, to the anonymous author of *Jacob's Well*, to a sermon by Bishop Thomas Brinton (no. 59), and to John Gower's *Mirour de l'Homme* (ca. 1376–1379).

of religious allegory. For this reason, however, he is required to reflect on the social conditions of his time, both in their concrete manifestations and in idealistic terms.

In the nineteenth chapter, dealing with "The Founding of Holy Church," Piers himself makes a most important appearance, representing both mankind at large and the Church itself. After Conscience has instructed him thoroughly about the life of Christ, the virtue of Grace joins them, calls together all people and outlines the way society is to be structured according the gifts that she hands out to everyone. Some people receive intelligence and the privilege of words, which entitles them to assume the profession of preachers and priests. Some people are empowered to turn to trading and merchandizing, while others are assigned the job of serving as peasants to produce the necessary foodstuff. But the narrator hastens to add that there is nothing wrong with doing manual labor since it is "an honest and fine way of life" (237). Grace teaches each person some special skills, and these determine their position in life: "some, to till the soil, to ditch and to thatch, and so to earn their living" (237).

Significantly, indirectly reflecting on bitter social strife and contempt of the lower classes by the upper class, the nobility, Grace urges everyone to recognize that each person holds the one job assigned by God, which makes all people, in a way, rather equal. But only if there is no contempt and ridicule, will there be a kind of social utopia: "'each craft must love the other, and forbidding all strife between them. 'Some occupations are cleaner than others,' said Grace, 'but you can be sure that the man who works at the pleasantest job could just as easily have been put to the foulest. So you must all remember that your talents are gifts from me. Let no profession despise another, but love one another as brothers'" (238). Piers the Plowman, however, is appointed as a manager, bailiff, and treasurer. The plowman, or farmer, is thus elevated to the highest position in this world: "'Piers, then, shall be my purveyor as well as my ploughman on earth; and I shall give him a team of oxen to plough the field of Truth'" (238).

The following sections outline the fundamental teachings and the history of the Church insofar as the four oxen that Piers receives from Grace are identified as the four Fathers of the Church (238) and the seeds of corn as the Cardinal Virtues. Once Piers has completed the plowing and sowing, he is required to do harrowing, which he does by means of the Old and the New Law "so that Love might grow up among the four virtues, and destroy the vices" (239). Subsequently Grace enjoins Piers to build a barn to store the grain he hopes to harvest. He can do that, however, only if he receives building material from Grace, which is the Cross on which Christ was killed.

The employment of cultural metaphors does not stop there, however. Instead, once Piers has gone to the plow, he is attacked by various vices, such as Pride, Arrogance, and "Speak-evil-behind-your-back" (240). But the Virtues defend

themselves, again as people in the farming community would do, following Conscience's advice: "'I think we should get inside Unity as fast as we can, and stay there together, and pray that there may be peace in the barn of Piers the Ploughman'" (241). The rest of the chapter concerns itself with practices of penance and the preparation for the Apocalypse, but then also includes severe criticism of the Church in its worldly manners and financial wrongdoings affecting the masses of people. Almost as expected, the Pope above all becomes the target of the poet's biting criticism: "But as long as the Pope gets his own way, it seems he cares nothing about the rest of the world" (245).

In other words, for Langland the sphere of the peasant class was as relevant as any other during his lifetime. He integrated all the essential kinds of labor typical for a farm into his moral and religious teachings, metamorphosing plowing, seeding, and harrowing as the critical tasks which any good Christian has to do to please God. In fact, basically drawing from the original story about Adam being forced to turn to plowing after his expulsion from Paradise, Langland projects the peasant as the ideal representative of all people here on earth.¹⁷⁹

As Paul Freedman observes, "Allegorical and shifting in his symbolic meaning though he may be, Piers does incorporate the dignity of labor and its symbolic association with religious duties and with Christ. The late Middle Ages would produce a number of other examples of the pious plowman."¹⁸⁰ In fact, didactic writers had little hesitation to emphasize how much all of society depended on the hard labor by the peasant, and that hence all good virtues resulted from a profound respect for the 'third estate.'

William Langland diverges considerably from the approach by contemporary writers, such as Johann von Tepl (see my discussion below), by allegorizing all aspects of a farmer's labor in religious terms. Yet, he reflects in more realistic terms on the farmer than we would have expected for a late-medieval author. Not only does he allegorize the peasant and his different types of labor, he also expresses great sympathy and pity with the lower social class at large, suffering, as he emphasizes, from criminal treatments by the upper class. The essential conflict concerns the allegorical figure of Peace which is attacked by Crime. In his appeal to Parliament, Peace bitterly laments about his suffering, which did not even stop with Crime having run away with his own wife: "his ruffians have seized my pigs and geese, and I'm too scared of him to argue or put up a fight. He has borrowed my horse and never brought it back, and refused to pay a farthing for it though I

¹⁷⁹ Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, "Piers Plowman," *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 513–38, discusses primarily the textual versions, the author's learned and clerical background, his reflections on the miserable history of his time, his source materials, his literary methods, and influence on his contemporaries and posterity.

¹⁸⁰ Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 120), 228.

begged him for the money" (56). Peace, serving as a spokesperson for the rural population, is helpless against the endless criminal actions brought upon him by Crime: "He breaks down my barn doors and carries off my corn, and all I get is a tally-stick for two hundred weight or more of oats. And on top of all this, he beats me up and goes to bed with my daughter, and I live in such terror of him, I daren't lift a finger" (57).

Fortunately, all subsequent efforts by Crime to utilize Wisdom (or Cleverness), Cunning, and Fee to bribe the king and to get himself off the hook, his reliance on the king's corruption comes to nought. After all, the king's Conscience enters the stage and prevents the king from accepting the bribery: "Then Conscience said to the king, 'Unless you win the support of the common people, you will find it very hard to bring this about, and govern your subjects strictly according to justice'" (60). We are not told in specific terms what this fully entails for the rural population, or in what way the peasants really receive the king's unqualified support. What matters for us pertains only to the presentation of the poor people's suffering, their outcry to the king, and the major role which Conscience and Reason play to fend off all attempts by Crime (we could also say Power, or Money) to influence the king's opinion and to get off the charge scot-free.

Narrowly regarded, Langland does not say much, if anything at all, about the world of the peasants at his time. His *Piers Plowman* proves to be an allegorical romance in which the basic human virtues and vices fight against each other, where fundamental theological teachings are expressed in metaphorical terms, and where the central Christian teachings find most vivid and literarily stylized expressions. Nevertheless, behind all these moral and ethical teachings we clearly perceive a dimension of social reality, of the poor people's suffering and constant laments about their mistreatment by the rich and powerful. However, Langland does not develop any kind of revolutionary critique and only outlines the basic boundaries of the medieval class system. Insofar as he grants *Piers Plowman* a central role to bring to light the major critical issues in the religious and ethical debate of his poem, he also pays a major tribute to the class of peasants. The rural population deserved, as he saw it, considerable recognition, at least as much as the clergy and the nobility.

Many medieval authors, especially if didactically oriented, included extensive information about how they viewed the status and standing of each social class; hence also of the peasantry. Normally, there are no surprises since the peasants' subordinated role was standard and regarded as the norm in most western European countries, here disregarding the fascinating testimony of the Scandinavian countries, especially Iceland, where the society consisted virtually

only of farmers.¹⁸¹ However, throughout the centuries, countless economic, social, climatic, political, and religious changes had a tremendous impact on the relationships between the peasants and the two other upper classes, and then between the rural population and the urban dwellers.

Next I will examine what some didactic writers had to say, and then also consider several late-medieval literary examples in which the peasant figure suddenly assumed a critical function, supporting, rescuing, or protecting the protagonist. There are even a number of literary reports about farmers being involved in chivalric duels, which they could decide for themselves.¹⁸²

20. Johannes von Tepl's *Ackermann*: A German-Czech Writer's Reference to the Metaphorical Peasant

For comparison's sake, let us quickly divert our attention to a parallel text also dealing with the plowman. Significantly, after all, a fairly similar approach was pursued by a near contemporary in the German speaking parts of Bohemia, the present-day Czech Republic, Johann von Tepl, who composed his famous dialogue text, the *Ackermann aus Böhmen* around 1400/1401. Again, we encounter the Plowman, but this time he is not really doing the job of a farmer, plowing, but instead he draws his name from that activity, though now transferred to the metaphorical plowing, utilizing a quill to write. Johann's text is also religious in its undertones, but mostly concerned with fundamental questions pertaining to the meaning of life in the face of ever-present death.

Debating with Death about the reasons why he took his wife away from him, and this much too early and unjustly, the Ackermann/Plowman for a long time seems to be in utter despair and filled with enormous grief which prevents him from arguing rationally. The poet specifically resorted to the peasant figure, the plowman, because this made it possible for him to discuss human suffering at large, relating all people, once again, to the *ur-father*, Adam. The illustrators of some of the manuscripts—here I refer to the one held in the University Library of Heidelberg—picked up that cue and explicitly depicted the plowman as a farmer, holding a hoe over his shoulder and wearing typical peasant clothing. The Plowman's extended right hand, almost touching Death's left hand resting on a staff, signals how much they are engaged in a heated debate. Nothing distracts us as viewers from this pair, located in a meadow not populated with any trees,

¹⁸¹ Magnus Stefansson, "Iceland," *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York and London: Garland, 1993), 311–19.

¹⁸² Sarah Neumann, *Der gerichtliche Zweikampf: Gottesurteil – Wettstreit – Ehrensache*. Mittelalter-Forschungen, 31 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 2010), 178–83.

animals, or other people. Ultimately, then, as the illustrator tried to convey to us, the fundamental questions of all human life can, or must even be raised and probed in plain nature (see Fig. 2).

Only in the course of their highly stylized rhetorical exchanges does the Plowman slowly come out of his mourning, turns more critically toward Death, wonders about his nature and meaning, and at the end successfully defends human life as God's crowning achievement during His creation. God, of course, still awards victory to death because all people, all existence, has to pass away and must make room for new life. Nevertheless, God at the end grants the Ackerman at least honor because he has worthily and proudly defended life, his marriage, and his beloved wife, and in this sense has defended God's creation most worthily.¹⁸³ Insofar as the poet has invested him with the attributes of a farmer, and so has intimately associated him with Adam, the *ur*-father of all people, he has paid considerable tribute to the world of farmers, although he does not discuss the specific aspects of agricultural activities at all.

21. Hugo von Trimberg's *Renner*: A Thirteenth-Century Didactic Perspective Toward Peasants

Let us backtrack just a little so that we can let another voice in this broad discourse on nature, animals, and the farm world come to the fore. With his *Renner* (1300; The Runner), the Bamberg school master Hugo von Trimberg composed one of the largest didactic treatises in Middle High German, consisting of ca. 25,000 verses. He structured it according to the Seven Deadly Sins, but addressed a wide range of aspects relevant for human life, such as the *septem artes*, astronomy, medicine, psychology, pedagogy, then also money, the foolishness of tournaments, contemporary poets, and the various social classes. In this regard his treatise was

¹⁸³ There are many editions available now, see, for instance, Johannes von Tepl, *der ackerman*. Auf Grund der deutschen Überlieferung und der tschechischen Bearbeitung herausgegeben von Willy Krogmann. Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters, Neue Folge, 1 (1954; Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1978); see now Johannes de Tepla Civis Zacensis, *Epistola cum Libello ackerman und Das büchleinackerman*. Nach der Freiburger Hs. 163 und der Stuttgarter Hs. HB X 23. Vol. 1: *Text und Übersetzung*, ed. Karl Bertau. Vol. 2: *Untersuchungen* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); see also the English translation, Johannes von Saaz, *Death and the Plowman; Or, The Bohemian Plowman: A Disputatious and Consolatory Dialogue About Death from the Year 1400*, trans. Ernest N Kirmann. University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 22 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1958). Cf. Gerhard Hahn, *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen des Johannes von Tepl*. Erträge der Forschung, 215 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984); Christian Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität: Der 'Ackermann' des Johannes von Tepl und die Ambiguität historischen Wandels*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 113 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998).

very similar to contemporary or later sermons (see, for instance, the early thirteenth-century *Fasciculus morum* to which I will refer at the very end) and allegorical poems such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. Hugo enjoyed enormous success with his work, as documented by seventy-four manuscripts, three fragments, and even one early-modern print from 1549 (Frankfurt a. M.: Cyriacus Jacob zum Bock).¹⁸⁴ Undoubtedly, viewing human society through the lens of these seven deadly sins, combined with images of rural life, was almost a guarantee for 'literary' success in premodern society.

Hugo dedicates a whole chapter to the world of the farmers, whom he calls "gebûrvolc" (1310; peasant people) and of whom he does not have a high opinion, regarding many of them as recalcitrants and obstructionists. In fact, the lords are necessary to keep the peasants under control, who would otherwise tend to become arrogant and could break out of their social class, transgressing their God-given status.

In order to illustrate the basic conditions, the author presents himself as a horseman arriving in a village where he observes the peasants just lying around, while their former wet-nurses seek the lice in their hair. One of the peasants approaches Hugo and inquires about the reasons for the social injustice, since they are lacking freedom, while the nobles enjoy their freedom. At first Hugo is thronged by a group of peasants because he affirms the justification for different social ranks, but then they ask him for the reasons, which allows the author to initiate his didactic discourse. Mocking the peasants further, Hugo explains that he had to get off his horse and offer the requested answer since it would not be wise to irritate drunkards (1350–51).

¹⁸⁴ Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann. Mit einem Nachwort und Ergänzungen von Günther Schweikle. 4 vols. Deutsche Neudrucke. Reihe: Texte des Mittelalters (1908; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970); here I will only consult vol. 1. For some critical discussions, see Franz Götting, *Der Renner Hugos von Trimberg: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Ethik in nachhöfischer Zeit*. Forschungen zur deutschen Sprache und Dichtung, 1 (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932); Inés de la Cuadra, *Der 'Renner' Hugos von Trimberg: Allegorische Denkformen und literarische Traditionen*. Germanistische Texte und Studien, 63 (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1999); Rudolf Kilian Weigand, *Der 'Renner' des Hugo von Trimberg: Überlieferung, Quellenabhängigkeit und Struktur einer spätmittelalterlichen Lehrdichtung*. Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 35 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2000), 41–136 (precise description of all manuscripts and the print). Three manuscripts seem to be lost today. The total number of manuscripts might also be only sixty-six, depending on how we might count duplicates and fragments; see the regularly updated and highly reliable *Marburger Repertorium*, <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/653> (last accessed on Oct. 1, 2011). See also Albrecht Classen, "Thomasin von Zerclaere's *Der Welsche Gast* and Hugo von Trimberg's *Der Renner*: Two Middle High German Didactic Writers Focus on Gender Relations," *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys. Disputatio, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 205–29.

Hugo discusses the differentiation with respect to the biblical account of Noah's three sons, one of whom, Ham, had not cared to cover his father's shame when he observed him lying drunk in his tent (*Genesis* 9:22). Since then, according to Hugo, the peasants were Ham's descendants and thus could not avoid their destiny of being unfree. But he then expands his own definition and categorizes everyone else who does not behave properly as a Christian should, that is, heathens, Jews, heretics, and any Christian criminals and sinners, as Ham's people suffering from Noah's curse (1401–05). In fact, Hugo does not idealize the aristocrats either, since many of them have acted against God's will and behaved sinfully. Consequently, he identifies only those people as noble who command a noble spirit, while material wealth would not cut muster in that regard (1417–18).

The highest goal in life would be to acquire virtues and to live a virtuous life, irrespective of one's economic status, income, or wealth (1428–29). Of course, this was a very common approach pursued by medieval didactic writers, who tended to criticize virtually everyone in society, while only very few people actually met all expectations.¹⁸⁵ Emphasizing basic morality and ethics as the essential conditions that would make someone to a noble person, Hugo can quiet down the peasants because it sounds like a just concept: “Nieman ist schœne, edel und rîch / Denn der dâ kumt ze himelrîch” (1453–54; No one is beautiful, noble, and rich unless he is qualified to enter the heavenly realm). In fact, he instills hope in the peasants that they might be rather privileged to be welcomed by God than their earthly lords if the latter do not display the required virtuosity and Christian ideals (1455–58).

In general, however, peasants are obligated to work for their lords and must accept their own destiny, although then Hugo does not shy away from criticizing the village administrators and low-level aristocrats who abuse their subjects and their mediocre rank (1927–30). Summarizing his social viewpoints, Hugo emphasizes that the aristocrats are required to provide military protection for everyone, while the clergy is supposed to pray and to speak on behalf of all Christians. The peasants, in turn, are required to produce food and share it appropriately with the other classes. Anything else would constitute criminal, sinful behavior: “Swër über reht arme liute twinget / Und si ze grôzen schaden bringet / Mit bete, mit ungelte und mit stiure, / Des sêle gâhet ze dem hellischen fiure” (2221–24; He who imposes his power on the poor people and causes them

¹⁸⁵ See, for instance, Volker Honemann, “Aspekte des ‘Tugendadels’ im europäischen Spätmittelalter,” *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann. Germanistische Symposien-Berichtsbände, 5 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984), 274–88. James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), coined the wonderfully appropriate term “aristophilia” for this ‘love of courtliness’ (79–98).

great losses by way of requests, false charges, and taxes, will see his soul go into the hellish fire).

For Hugo, like many other didactic writers, the preservation of the traditional social structures represents the highest goal, and so he does not hesitate to reprimand both riotous peasants and offensive lords, whom he seriously warns to abstain from their un-Christian and abusive behavior. Apparently, the writer perceived his own time as one of ethical decline, with a majority of princes no longer upholding the old values and deliberately undermining the ideals of loyalty, self-control, service, and education (2230–58).¹⁸⁶ A very similar perspective can also be detected in the didactic poem *Des Teufels Netz* (early fifteenth century). There the major criticism is focused on the peasants' suffering from feudal obligations, regularly forcing them to abandon their own fields and pastures because their lords require their service as part of their feudal bonds.¹⁸⁷

Insofar as Hugo carefully examines the relationship between peasants and their lords, and critically evaluates wrong behavior and attitudes on both sides of the equation, he forces his readers to keep an open mind as to the rural space in social terms. We also realize how little the social classes in the Middle Ages were really separated from each other, insofar as the peasants regularly felt the attraction to accumulate more wealth in order to rise on the social ladder, while the aristocrats were easily subject to greed and tended to abuse their subjects.

22. Wernher der Gartenære's *Helmbrecht*: The Attempted Break Out of the Social Order

Again, as long as peasants comply with the social role assigned to them according to a divine plan, peace and justice seem to function well. The food-producing farmer is highly regarded, virtually the descendent of Adam since his expulsion from Paradise. Food is essential, so the farmers are crucial for the survival of society. However, there is the constant danger that individuals could be instilled

¹⁸⁶ Goheen, *Mensch und Moral im Mittelalter: Geschichte und Fiktion in Hugo von Trimbergs [sic] "Der Renner"* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 126–28.

¹⁸⁷ Schubert, *Einführung* (see note), 65–66; for an old, but so far only text edition, see *Des teufels Netz: satirisch-didaktisches Gedicht aus der ersten Hälfte des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. Karl August Barack. Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 70 (Stuttgart: Litterarischer Verein, 1863); a new edition is currently in preparation. For some recent studies, see Anke Ehlers, *Des Teufels Netz; Untersuchung zum Gattungsproblem*. Studien zur Poetik und Geschichte der Literatur, 35 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973); Franz-Josef Schweitzer, *Tugend und Laster in illustrierten didaktischen Dichtungen des späten Mittelalters: Studien zu Hans Vintlers Blumen der Tugend und zu Des Teufels Netz*. Germanistische Texte und Studien, 41 (Hildesheim and New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1993).

with pride and arrogance and aspire for more social recognition than their due. This finds a powerful expression in Wernher der Gartenære's *Helmbrecht* (ca. 1250/1280), in which the young protagonist, against his father's desperate pleadings, departs from home and joins a gang of robber knights, or rather serves as one of the criminal band members of a ruthless lord. His mother and sister have already prepared him with many of the necessary trappings, only a horse is missing, which his father finally hands over to him, although he has great misgivings resulting from several prophetic dreams.

Young Helmbrecht despises the entire class of peasants and ridicules even his own father, then turns to a life of brutality, robbery, and thievery, returns home once, displays many of his new-found riches, takes his sister with him to marry one of his fellow robbers, but they are then suddenly all apprehended by the authorities and executed, except for our protagonist. He 'only' loses his eyes, his left leg, and his right arm, making him into a miserable cripple who is completely ostracized and cannot even ask his own parents for help. A year later peasants apprehend him and take their revenge on him for his countless crimes against his own people, and lynch him without any mercy.¹⁸⁸

Apart from the social criticism voiced in this text, we also observe important aspects characteristic of late-medieval peasantry. This farmer, old Helmbrecht, is a rich man, and this unfortunately results in his son's tremendous ambitions to rise above the traditional class boundaries. We observe, for instance, that the father has employed farm hands and maids, and he can easily afford enough horses to give one to his son without suffering any economic consequences. He also owns four strong oxen for plowing the fields, who all have personal names, which young Helmbrecht has to identify upon his return from court (814–34), like a *shibboleth*, after he had pretended to be from a much higher social class than his old family by means of foolishly uttered foreign terms.¹⁸⁹

Two models of the stereotypical peasant are presented here, with the old Helmbrecht representing the ideal person, living up to the social, ethical, and

¹⁸⁸ Wernher der Gartenære, *Helmbrecht*, ed. Friedrich Panzer and Kurt Ruh. 10th ed. by Hans-Joachim Ziegeler. *Altdeutsche Textbibliothek*, 11 (1902; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995). For critical perspectives, see the contributions to *Wernher der Gärtner: 'Helmbrecht' . Die Beiträge des Helmbrecht-Symposiums in Burghausen 2001*, ed. Theodor Nolte and Tobias Schneider (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 2001); Petra Menke, *Recht und Ordo-Gedanke im Helmbrecht*. *Germanistische Arbeiten zu Sprache und Kulturgeschichte*, 24 (Frankfurt a. M. and New York: Peter Lang, 2001); Günter Lange, *Zeitkritik im "Helmbrecht" von Wernher dem Gärtner und ihre sozialgeschichtlichen Hintergründe* (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag Hohengehren, 2009).

¹⁸⁹ Albrecht Classen, "Dialogics and Loss of Identity: Linguistic Community and Self-Destructive Individuation in Wernher the Gardener's *Helmbrecht*," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 41 (1995): 143–60; id., "Polyglots in Medieval German Literature: Outsiders, Critics, or Revolutionaries? Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, Wernher the Gardener's *Helmbrecht*, and Oswald von Wolkenstein," *Neophilologus* 91.1 (2007): 101–15.

religious expectations in a farmer, while his son tries to break free and rebels against the traditional *ordo*. This, however, results in a terrible fiasco and tragedy for him, especially because he does not turn into a kind of Robin Hood, and only robs from his own kin and social community, never understanding the true implications of his own actions, which only hurt his family and neighbors, and does nothing to undermine the social status of the upper classes.¹⁹⁰

As revolutionary as Wernher's verse narrative seems to be at first sight, it quickly turns toward highly conservative values and is predicated on severe criticism of the social changes that have affected courtly society, above all, as the exchange between father and son indicate, when young Helmbrecht has returned home and reports about his experiences. However, as his gifts the young man has chosen objects that are useful for the peasant existence, meeting very specific needs, such as a whetting stone, a scythe, and a hoe (1057–66). But then he also pulls out more luxurious objects as gifts for his mother and his sister, all robbed from rich people belonging to the clergy or the merchant class (1067–80). Although *Helmbrecht* is explicitly situated in the peasant world, the ultimate message is directed at the nobility and the urban class, warning them all about the dangers of a disruption of traditional society and the transgression of ethical, moral, and religious norms.

23. The Testimony of Medieval and Late-Medieval Art

Surprisingly, at least at first sight, while medieval poets happily turned to the peasant figure and explored the countless features characterizing that social class, medieval art displayed very little interest in the farmer and rural space. We observe from time to time some references to Adam plowing the field, such as in one of the stained glass windows in the west facade of the Canterbury cathedral (Fig. 1),¹⁹¹ but mostly the religious interest dominated virtually everything artists could produce or were commissioned to do. In one of my own contributions I will turn the attention to the famous *Books of Hours*, but here it is worthwhile to consider the dearth of evidence in Romanesque and Gothic art at large. Fresco art in medieval churches, chapels, and cathedrals was dominated by biblical scenes, and apart from some acanthus leaves here and there, and sometimes a fleeting

¹⁹⁰ Jutta Goheen, *Mensch und Moral* (see note 186), 121–28.

¹⁹¹ Jonathan Keates, *Canterbury Cathedral*. Photos by Angelo Hornak (England: Scala Publications, 1988); M. A. Michael, with a chapter by Sebastian Strobl, *Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: Scala, 2004); Marie-Pierre Gelin, *Lumen ad revelationem gentium: Iconographie et liturgie à Christ Church, Canterbury, 1175–1220*. Culture et sociétés médiévales, 12 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006).

perspective into a natural background, until the 1400s we do not really find any significance reflection of rural space there.¹⁹²

While in the early Middle Ages the interest in visual representation of rural space, and hence also of the peasant world, was hardly developed, if we disregard presentations of flowers, animals, trees such as in the Gospel Book by the monk Godescalcus from 781 and 783,¹⁹³ in the Gothic era, or at least since the twelfth century, some nativity scenes or other episodes in the New Testament earned the artists' respect. The story of the divine creation found entrance in numerous illustrations of biblical texts and in stone sculptures at the west facade of churches and cathedrals or in floor mosaics, such as in the Capella Palatina in Palermo (ca. 1150).

A remarkable example proves to be one of the illustrations of the Munich manuscript of the *Carmina Burana* depicting a fantasy landscape populated by various animals roaming in a forest (lower register), and filled with a wealth of plants of all kinds, real or unreal. While in the top register the plants and trees turn toward a divine creator somewhere above them, while in the bottom register they turn toward each other and thus have, as part of the universal, God-given world, the chance of perfecting each other and to grow into their full potential, a divinely inspired concept of love in physical and spiritual terms.¹⁹⁴ Most monastic art, in the form of tapestry, altar cloths, wall paintings, and manuscript illuminations, left out the rural elements, and allowed only such animals or plants to appear that were already mentioned in the Bible. Shepherds and their herd animals, solitary donkeys, and very simple hints of grass, plants, or maybe bushes represent the only exceptions, when we refer to the art works produced in late-medieval northern German women's convents.¹⁹⁵

Nevertheless, we really have to wait until such pieces as Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *The Good City Republic* from 1338–1340 in the Sala dei Nove, Palazzo Pubblico,

¹⁹² See the stellar, highly illustrated volume *Die mittelalterliche Wandmalereien zwischen Rhein, Neckar und Enz*, ed. Klaus Gereon Beuckers. Heimatverein Kraichgau, Sonderveröffentlichungen, 35 (Ubstadt-Weiher, Heidelberg, et al.: verlag regionalkultur, 2011) as a confirmation to the negative.

¹⁹³ Wolfram von den Steinen, *Homo Caelestis: Das Wort der Kunst im Mittelalter* (Bern and Munich: Francke: 1965), vol. 1, 113, 2, ill. no. 65a; Johannes Zahlten, "Die Naturdarstellungen in der mittelalterlichen Kunst," *Geschichte des Mittelalters für unsere Zeit: Erträge des Kongresses des Verbandes der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands "Geschichte des Mittelalters im Geschichtsunterricht" Quedlinburg 20.–23. Oktober 1999*, ed. Rolf Ballof (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 2003), 109–24; here 110–11.

¹⁹⁴ Zahlten, "Die Naturdarstellungen" (see note 193), 114–15.

¹⁹⁵ Ulrike Volkhardt, Hans-Walter Stork, and Wolfgang Brandis, *Nonnen, Engel, Fabelwesen: Musikdarstellungen in den Lüneburger Klöstern* (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2011). See, for example, the altar cloth from the monastery Wienhausen, Wie Hb 5, 2nd half of the fourteenth century, p. 133. The top border of ms. Hs. 29, fol. 6r, shows, even if only in smallest detail, a rabbit blowing a tuba and a monkey hitting a drum, p. 145.

Siena, or the famous collection of *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, ca. 1280, a vast compendium of ca. 1,800 illustrations accompanying the Marian songs by King Alfonso X of Castile and Leon (r. 1252–1284), were created. In zodiac images, model books with animals, bestiaries, illuminations for all kinds of treatises and collections of love songs, such as the *Manesse* manuscript (ca. 1330–1340), in a Genoese treatise on the seven vices from ca. 1370 (British Library, London, MS Egerton 3127, fol. 1v), or in the famous “Five Senses Tapestries” in the Musée de Cluny, Paris, from ca. 1500, tentative attempts were realized to incorporate elements borrowed from rural space.¹⁹⁶

There would not be any need to qualify the fundamental changes occurring in late-medieval art, the definite stepping stone to the Renaissance, although both cultural periods existed a long time right next to each other, parallel, or even overlapping. The number of art objects increased, and so their diversity. Artists explored more and more motifs and themes to embellish their works, which automatically led to the integration of rural space, whether the wild forest or the domesticated garden, the hunting ground or the agricultural sphere. Fifteenth-century tapestries and book illustrations, biblical scenes on altar pieces and in stained glass windows, frescoes in ecclesiastical (Wienhausen) and secular interiors (Runkelstein near Bozen), wooden carvings, and also, perhaps most importantly, oil paintings, such as Conrad Witz’s “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes” (1444; Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva), confirm this observation.¹⁹⁷

How much the artists stylized, and to what extent they drew from model books, instead of studying nature, or rural space as such, cannot be decided here. What matters, by contrast, seems to be the changing focus toward the natural world which increasingly gained in importance in late medieval art at any rate.¹⁹⁸ In countless illustrations we see popping up little forests, meadows, pastures, lakes and ponds, farmers, roads, mountains, shrubbery, flowers, animals, and the like. Some particularly interesting examples might be Lukas Moser’s Magdalen altar in the parish church of Tiefenbronn from 1432,¹⁹⁹ the altar piece by the master of the Benediktbeuren Crucifixion from ca. 1455, Munich, Alte Pinakothek (137), or Lucas

¹⁹⁶ See, for instance, Michael Camille, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996); Sandra Batagli, *European Art of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. by Brian D. Philips (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007). For a nice chronological survey, see *Medieval Mastery: Book Illumination from Charlemagne to Charles the Bold, 800–1475*, ed. Lee Preedy and William Noël (Davidsfonds and Leuven: Brepols, 2002). The number of relevant studies, catalogues, and anthologies dealing with Gothic art is, of course, legion.

¹⁹⁷ Martin Warnke, *Spätmittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit 1400–1750. Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999). 98–100; see also Georg Schmidt, *Konrad Witz. Langewiesche Bücherei* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1962)

¹⁹⁸ Wim Swaan, *The Late Middle Ages: Art and Architecture from 1350 to the Advent of the Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY, and New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

¹⁹⁹ Warnke, *Spätmittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit* (see note 197), 78–82, 137, 157, 164, et passim.

Cranach the Elder's portrait of Doctor Johannes Cuspinian from ca. 1502, Winterthur, Collection Oskar Reinhart (157).

The exclusive focus on the spiritual dimension is expanded, not abandoned at all; instead it is considerably widened by way of incorporating the natural background, rural context, and the social conditions determining the painted object, theme, or figure. Albrecht Dürer's famous self-portrait from 1498, Madrid, Prado confirms this observation most impressively.²⁰⁰ While the artist's eyes are intently focused on the viewer (perhaps himself, like in a mirror image), he still made sure that a window opens up on his right, allowing us to perceive the wide-open, soon mountainous background, though it has hardly any vegetation and at first sight seems to be just a kind of artistic afterthought.²⁰¹

Of course, this did not mean that we are suddenly facing naturalist painters or artists. Instead, they realized primarily the importance of natural or realistic reference points that could assist in leading the devout to a better understanding of the spiritual dimension because the familiar city, for instance, or a well-known hill or mountain could be associated with the same objects in the biblical context.²⁰² The corpus of evidence for this realization is simply overwhelming, but we can also refer to the wonderful work by Jörg Ratgeb, such as his Herrenberg altar piece from 1519, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, where the natural background constitutes a veritably constitutive element in his work.²⁰³

Once the floodgates had been opened, the spiritual approach to the arts, as representative of Gothic art, was no longer sustainable, and rural space, if you will, had conquered its place, never to disappear again. This paradigm shift affected all

²⁰⁰ Warnke, *Spätmittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit* (see note 197), 164.

²⁰¹ Significantly, this kind of background or the natural context are completely missing in his haunting self-portrait from 1500, Munich, Alte Pinakothek (Warnke, *Spätmittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit* [see note 197], 169).

²⁰² Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Alastair Fowler, *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Martin Büchsel, *Realität und Projektion: wirklichkeitsnahe Darstellung in Antike und Mittelalter*. Neue Frankfurter Forschungen zur Kunst, 1 (Berlin: Mann, 2005); James H. Marrow, *Pictorial Invention in the Netherlandish Manuscript Illumination of the Late Middle Ages: The Play of Illusion and Meaning*, ed. Brigitte Dekeyser and Jan van der Stock. Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts = Corpus van verluchte handschriften, 16 (Paris and Dudley, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2005); Susan Bratton, *Environmental Values in Christian Art*. SUNY Series on Religion and the Environment (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008).

²⁰³ Arthur Burkhard, *The Herrenberg Altar of Jörg Ratgeb*. His Seven German Altars (Munich: Bruckmann, 1965); Wilhelm Fraenger, *Jörg Ratgeb: ein Maler und Märtyrer aus dem Bauernkrieg*, ed. Gustel Fraenger and Ingeborg Baier-Fraenger. 2nd ed. (1972; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1981); *Jörg Ratgeb, Spurensicherung: Ausstellung Karmeliterkloster, Frankfurt, Münzgasse 6. Juni bis 18. Juli 1985; Reuchlin-Haus, Pforzheim 21. Juli bis 1. September 1985*, ed. Ute-Nortrud Kaiser (Frankfurt a. M.: Historisches Museum, 1985).

of Europe, though the development took place at different pace in each individual country. Leading in this regard certainly proved to be the artists and their patrons in Flanders where the Flemish miniaturists, above all, were at the vanguard of that paradigm shift.²⁰⁴ The delight with which these late-medieval artists turned their attention to the natural world is almost incomparable and can be detected in countless examples, though one of the most beautiful ones might be those for Petrus de Crescentis *Livre des profits ruraux*, Master of Margaret of York, ca. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque del' Arsenal, ms. 5064, fol. 265 (Smeyers, 402, plate 64).

Both the central miniature, showing many hunters pursuing animals and birds, and the fabulous frame with flowers and fruit underscore the enormous fascination with the natural environment, though it still carried a strong religious connotation. Another one is an illustration page for Virgil's *Agricola*, created in Bruges in 1475, today housed in Wells-Next-The Sea, Holklam Hall, Library of the Earl of Leicester, Ms. 311, fol. 41v, which shows the wide range of rural activities, from bee keeping to plowing the field to tending to the farm animals, cutting and pruning trees (Smeyers, 457, plate 58).

I will continue my discussion of rural space in late-medieval art further below, outlining the further developments into the early-modern age, but let us first gain a better understanding of the social and economic aspects relevant for our topic in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

24. Peasants, Rural Existence, the Protestant Reformation and Farmer's Self-Expression Until the Seventeenth Century

However, it would be completely erroneous to assume that the painters/artists and their patrons harbored a particular liking of the peasant class, or advocated any kind of social revolution, giving preference to rural existence over their own social status and life style. What we can undoubtedly affirm concerns the widening of the interest and awareness of the broad context, not, however, any softening of the social class boundaries. Of course, in the course of time, during the late Middle Ages and beyond, the social and economic conditions of the peasant class in many areas of Europe improved considerably, or at least experienced extensive changes, often to the better for them. As Fritz Martini had pointed out already many decades ago, throughout time the peasant had to serve as the archetypal foolish and ignorant figure about whom the different kinds of courtly or urban audiences were invited to laugh. Of course, many times we recognize in the staged peasant

²⁰⁴ Maurits Smeyers, *Flemish Miniatures From the 8th to the Mid-16th Century: The Medieval World on Parchment* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999).

a representative of all people, such as in the Shrovetide plays²⁰⁵; hence the satire is then really directed against the audience, whether aristocratic or bourgeois. But he also believed, which would have to be differentiated considerably today, that the separation of the social classes increased during the early modern time, allowing ever more sarcasm and mockery about the 'stupid' peasants to enter the literary scene.²⁰⁶ Martini offers the fascinating cumulative observation:

Doch ist das Schwankbild nur eine Seite im vielgesichtigen Bilde der sich jetzt breit strömend durchsetzenden Volksliteratur. Das späte Mittelalter und das Zeitalter der Reformation sind wahre Volkszeitalter im Bereich des Schrifttums und in allen ihren literarischen Kundgebungen volksmäßig gerichtet. Wohl wurde der Bauer selbst, soweit wir an unsere schriftlichen Überlieferungen gebunden sind, nicht literarisch produktiv, aber volkstümliche Stoffe und Ausdrucksformen, an denen er teilhatte, setzten sich in allen Gattungskreisen des Schrifttums durch. Das Volk war zu einem Selbstbewußtsein erwacht, es nahm immer lebhafter an der Fülle der Auseinandersetzungen des Zeitalters teil und wandte sich so besonders auch dem dringenden, es selbst beständig treffenden ständischen Problemen zu.²⁰⁷

[The impression conveyed by the jest narrative is only one side of the multi-faceted picture of the broadly flowing popular literature that comes to the fore now. The late

²⁰⁵ Maria E. Müller, "Fastnachtspiel," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 4 (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1987), 314–16; Eckehard Simon, *Die Anfänge des weltlichen deutschen Schauspiels 1370–1530: Untersuchung und Dokumentation*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 124 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003); Klaus Amann and Max Siller, "Urban Literary Entertainment in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: The Example of Tyrol," *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 505–35.

²⁰⁶ Fritz Martini, *Das Bauerntum im deutschen Schrifttum von den Anfängen bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*. Buchreihe der Deutschen Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 27 (Halle a. d. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1944), 389–95. As well informed as Martini proves to be about the literary-historical evidence and the development of rural motifs in thirteenth-century Middle High German love poetry (Tannhäuser, Neiffen, et al.), especially in the use of his favorite term "volkstümlich," as much does he also echo the contemporary ideologized vocabulary and reveals a certain leaning toward the 'brown' ideology of *Blut und Boden*, as developed by the Nazis. He had joined the NSDAP already in 1933, but he developed a glorious career already in 1948; see Detlev Schöttker, "Martini, Fritz," *Internationales Germanistenlexikon 1800–1950*, ed. and introd. by Christoph König. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 1164–66. In my survey of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German songbooks I could identify a good number of biting peasant satires, but then also a handful of songs filled with praise on the farmer, Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Volksliedstudien, 1 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2001), 325 (index: "Bauernlob" and "Bauernspott"). See also the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen ("Utopian Space in the Countryside"). For the figure of the peasant in Middle English and Renaissance literature, see Ordelle G. Hill, *The Manor, the Plowman, and the Shepherd: Agrarian Themes and Imagery in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance English Literature* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press; London and Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993).

²⁰⁷ Martini, *Das Bauerntum* (see note 206), 393.

Middle Ages and the time of the Reformation are true epochs of the people with respect to writing and in all its literary manifestations. The peasants probably did not become active in literary terms, but popular themes and forms of expressions in which they participated made their way into all genres of contemporary literature. The people had become self-conscious, and they participated ever more actively in the multitude of conflicts of that era, and so especially to the pressing issues of (their own) class, which were constantly of concern to them.]

Lukas Richter mostly agrees, though without reference to Martini, that the body of poems composed by peasants in the late Middle Ages and in the time of the Protestant Reformation, including the period of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), was very limited, especially since the genre of so-called 'popular songs' was dominated by composing journeymen, craftsmen, lansquenets, and then, especially at the noble courts, professional composers. Certainly, well into the seventeenth century popular songs addressing issues relevant for agrarian society circulated, especially in the far north of Germany, in the Dithmarschen region, and far south in the Alpine territory. But in many cases those songs reflecting on the world of the farmers were not even composed by one of their own, although we know of a good handful of songs that explicitly lament about the peasants' miserable social conditions.²⁰⁸

In a number of cases special law books addressed the world of farmers who could enjoy a certain degree of freedom, whether in Switzerland or in northern Germany, in Iceland, or in other parts of Scandinavia. However, not until the French Revolution in 1789 and the Russian Revolution in 1918 did peasants all over the European landscape shake off the traditional yoke of oppression. That, however, is not the topic of our investigations.²⁰⁹

The peasant revolt in England in 1381, organized by a man called Tyler, seriously challenged traditional serfdom, but did not, in the long run, improve the situation of the rural population.²¹⁰ In Germany, the Peasants' War from 1524 to

²⁰⁸ Lukas Richter, "Das Volkslied im 17. Jahrhundert," Albrecht Classen and id., *Lied und Liederbuch in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Volksliedstudien, 10 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2010), 15–17; Helga Schüppert, "Der Bauer in der deutschen Literatur des Spätmittelalters – Topik und Realitätsbezug," *Bäuerliche Sachkultur des Spätmittelalters: internationaler Kongreß, Krems an der Donau, 21. bis 24. September*, ed. Heinrich Appelt. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für mittelalterliche Realienkunde Österreichs, 7 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), 125–76.

²⁰⁹ Hermann Strobach, *Bauernklagen: Untersuchungen zum sozialkritischen deutschen Volkslied*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für deutsche Volkskunde, 33 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964).

²¹⁰ Clifford Lindsey Alderman, *Flame of Freedom: The Peasant's Revolt of 1381* (Folkestone: Bailey and Swinfen, 1974); Ronald Webber, *The Peasant's Revolt: The Uprising in Kent, Essex, East Anglia and London in 1381 During the Reign of King Richard II* (Lavenham: Dalton, 1980); Alastair Dunn, *The Great Rising of 1381: The Peasant's Revolt and England's Failed Revolution* (Stroud, Gloucestershire; Charleston, SC: Tempus,, 2002); G. L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England, 1360–1461*. New Oxford History of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); for a

1525—in reality the crucial events began only early in 1525—caused a major social and military uproar, but ultimately the aristocracy could squash that attempt at a massive uprising, using brutal and sweeping forces.²¹¹ Of course, peasants were normally illiterate and did not create accounts about their efforts to address legal and political injustices. They had leaders, and they fought wars, but their side in the centuries-old conflicts with the upper classes was never appropriately addressed in written documents.²¹²

Hans Nabholz has conveniently summarized for us how the profound paradigm shift in agricultural society affected, more or less, all of medieval society, laying the foundation for the rise of the early modern world:

The penetration of a money economy into agrarian life produced profound changes in all Central and Western Europe. These changes occurred between 1300 and 1500.

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- detailed study of peasant revolts in light of legal history, that is, change in the legal conditions, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor; cf. also the quite useful and detailed article in *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peasants%27_Revolt (last accessed on Oct. 11, 2011).
- ²¹¹ Thomas Robischeaux, "The Peasantries of Western Germany, 1300–1750," *The Peasantries of Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Tom Scott (London and New York: Longman, 1998), 111–42; Tom Scott, "The Peasants' War," *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia. Blackwell Companions to European History (2004; Malden, MA, Oxford, and Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, 2006), 56–69; Peter Blickle, *Die Revolution von 1525*. 4th rev. ed. with an expanded bibliography (1989; Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2005); Wilhelm Zimmermann, *Der grosse deutsche Bauernkrieg* (Neu-Isenburg: Melzer Verlag, 2006); Horst Kratzmann, *Der große Bauernkrieg: Ursachen, Geschichte und Tragödie einer gescheiterten Revolution* (Groß-Gerau: Ancient-Mail-Verlag Betz, 2007). Since the middle of the nineteenth century, when Friedrich Engels had published his monumental and highly influential study on the German Peasants' War (1850 in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*; 2nd republication in 1870), scholars have always referred back to him, despite the heavy ideological thrust of his study, with in many ways helped to lay of foundations of Marxism (http://www.mlwerke.de/me/me07/me07_327.htm; last accessed on Sept. 28, 2011). For a rather different approach, based on legal history, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.
- ²¹² Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe 1200–1425: Italy, France, Flanders* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1984); see also the seminal study on the German Peasant War, Günther Franz, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, 12th ed. (1933 and 1935; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984). For relevant documents about the German Peasants' War, see *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg 1525: Herausgegeben in zeitgenössischen Zeugnissen*, ed. Günther Franz (Berlin: Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft, 1926). See also the contributions to *The German Peasant War of 1525: New Viewpoints*, ed. Bob Scribner and Gerhard Benecke (London and Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1979). Significantly, peasant uprisings continue to happen throughout the centuries and in a variety of countries, which signals the perennial struggle among the social classes; see, for instance, Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917–1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*. Perspectives on Southern Africa, 37 (London: J. Currey; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr., *Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao's Great Leap Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village*. Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Existing institutions did not begin to decay at the same time, nor was the nature of the change the same, in all countries, or even in all parts of any one country. A variety of special local circumstances produced conspicuous variations; and everywhere there was more tenacious conservation on monastic than on lay estates.

Near great towns the transition began in the twelfth century and even in the eleventh. Districts far from trade routes might first feel the effects of the money economy in the fifteenth century, or even later. One point, however, is clear: the money economy only partially superseded the natural economy on the land, and its consequences were not displayed to the same degree in all parts of any given area. Remnants of old institutions survived side by side with new ones down to the eighteenth century. Here, however, we can refer only to what was typical, to those new institutions which were decisive and directive of the further evolution.²¹³

Historiography has been intensively focusing on this war and its consequences, studying a plethora of local regions and particular conditions and communities, and there is a legion of critical study on the early-modern history of peasants in Germany, particularly because Martin Luther vehemently condemned the riotous peasants and strongly took the side of the princes with his pamphlet “Wider die mörderischen Rotten der Bauern” (1525).²¹⁴

25. Economic Aspects Pertaining to Rural Space

The old thesis by Henri Pirenne who claimed that the rise of the merchant class fundamentally supported the development of late-medieval cities might hold true for many different areas in Europe, such as in Tuscany, north of the Alps, or in northern France, but certainly not for the Po valley. In that region power was controlled, as Areli Marina now emphasizes, “by a small band of aristocrats whose authority derived from military might and whose revenues originated in the region’s abundant agricultural resources.”²¹⁵ This does not mean that the farmers

²¹³ Hans Nabholz, “Medieval Agrarian Society in Transition,” *The Cambridge Economic History* (see note 16) 493–61; here 554.

²¹⁴ For convenience sake, see the online versions of his text at: <http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Luther,+Martin/Traktate/Wider+die+r%C3%A4uberischen+und+m%C3%B6rderischen+Rotten+der+Bauern>. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Against_the_Murderous,_Thieving_Hordes_of_Peasants (both last accessed on Sept. 28, 2011). Of course, see also the critical edition of Luther’s works, D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgab (1883–; Weimar, H. Böhlau, 2007); see also James M. Stayer, “The German Peasants’ War and the Rural Reformation,” *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 127–45.

²¹⁵ Areli Marina, “Magnificent Architecture in Late Medieval Italy” (see note 7), 200. See also Philip Jones, “Economia e società nell’ Italia medievale: la legenda della borghesia,” *Storia d’Italia: Dal feudalismo al capitalismo*, a cura di Ruggiero Romano. Storia d’Italia, 1 (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), 187–372; id., *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

in that region necessarily exerted any particular influence, but this particular phenomenon forces us to question the general social-economic perspectives.

The living conditions of medieval and early-modern peasants differed considerably from country to country, and from period to period, and yet their social status was never like the one which they enjoy today. However, in the early modern age capitalistic forms of agribusiness emerged that certainly changed many of the traditional features characteristic of medieval peasantry, and this especially in England, though they also deeply affected many other parts of Europe. Already since the twelfth century, if not earlier, traditional serfdom had disappeared and given rise to considerably more independent farmers, but this did not mean their complete liberation, which social-economic researchers have studied at great length, pursuing the history of *longue durée*.²¹⁶

After all, the economic and social conditions in the rural communities both in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern Age had a deep impact on city life, the noble courts, and the church, and vice versa, whether there were conflicts or peaceful coexistence. We can rely by now on a very solid body of research, which is in the meantime also nicely complemented by archeological, textile, financial,

²¹⁶ Again, see the contributions to *The Peasantries of Europe* (see note 211); Robert Fossier, *Peasant Life in the Medieval West*, trans. by Juliet Vale (1984; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800*, ed. Jack Goody and Joan Thirsk (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Werner Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans. and with foreword and glossary by Alexander Stützer (1985; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990); Nicholas Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside*. *Warefare in History*, 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998); as to the English riots in 1381, see the contributions to *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, ed. R. B. Dobson. *History in Depth* (London: Macmillan, 1997). For a fascinating case study, see Govind P. Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487-1726: A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe*. Past and Present Publications (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Mark O'Brien, *When Adam delved and Eve span: A History of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (Cheltenham: New Clarion, 2004). For social unrest among the early-modern French rural population, see Yves-Marie Bercé, *History of Peasant Revolts: The Social Origins of Rebellion in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990). For England, see Richard L. Rudolph, *The European Peasant Family and Society: Historical Studies*. *Liverpool Studies in European Population*, 4 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994). For insights into Scandinavian conditions, see the contributions to *Land, Lords and Peasants: Peasants' Right to Control Land in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period—Norway, Scandinavia and the Alpine Region: Report from a Seminar in Trondheim, November 2004*, ed. Tore Iversen and John and Regnar Myking. *Trondheim Studies in History*, 52 (Trondheim: Department of History and Classical Studies, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2005). For perspectives on German conditions in the late Middle Ages, see Ernst Schubert, *Einführung in die Grundprobleme der deutschen Geschichte im Spätmittelalter*. *Grundprobleme der deutschen Geschichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 93–96; and Werner Rösener, *Agrarwirtschaft, Agrarverfassung und ländliche Gesellschaft im Mittelalter*. *Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte*, 13 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010).

and architectural studies focused on villages, farm houses, the farm itself, and the people.²¹⁷

As René Noël now confirms, reflecting on decades of research on the rural space, the village, and rural architecture,

Des villages les poignées ou les paquets de maisons et d'édicules annexes mal enracinés, vaguement groupés ou jetés en désordre qu'on rencontre dans les campagnes avant 900–950? Nullement. “Ce sont des ‘habitats’ sans plus”. Il leur manque l'essentiel: un lieu d'ancrage séculaires, une implantation ferme autour de pôles de regroupement, un finage organisé à l'intérieur de limites reconnues et, surtout, une conscience collective et une personnalité juridique. Il en va autrement en 1100. Alors, en maintes régions, les paysans naissent, vivent et meurent au sein de localités stables, enchâssées dans un finage de plus en plus cohérent. Ils tissent entre eux des liens de solidarité et prennent conscience de leur communauté d'intérêt . . .²¹⁸

[What about the handful of villages, the hamlets, or the attached houses poorly grounded, loosely situated, or spread randomly as they existed in the countryside before 900–950? Nothing. “These are the habitations that don't exist anymore.” Their essential component is missing, that is, a place with a worldly foundation, a firm implantation surrounded by poles that stake out the settlement, a legal base organized for the inclosed community or with recognized limits and, above all, a collective conscience and a juridical identity. Around 1100 all this changes. In most regions the peasants are born, live, and die at stable locations, surrounded by a legal framework increasingly gaining coherence. They develop among themselves bonds of solidarity and forge a conscience of their community of shared interests . . .]

There was no and continues not to be any basic model of village structures, though certain basic patterns still existed at most places. The conditions of the rural space mattered greatly in that regard, and it was also defined by gender-specific criteria.²¹⁹ We also would have to consider the extent to which the rural population was not really homogenous, as we have already observed with regard to the

²¹⁷ Jean-Pierre Leguay, *Pauvres et marginaux au Moyen Age*. Gisserot-histoire ([Paris]: J.-P. Gisserot, 2009); Jean Chapelot and Robert Fossier, *The Village & House in the Middle Ages*, trans. Henry Cleere (1980; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); see also the contributions to *Villages et villageois au Moyen âge: Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public [21e Congrès, Caen, juin 1990]*. Publications de la Sorbonne. Série Histoire ancienne et médiévale, 26 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, Impr. graphique de l'Ouest, 1992); *L'espace rural au Moyen Age: Portugal, Espagne, France, XIIe–XIVe siècle: mélanges en l'honneur de Robert Durand*, ed. Monique Bourin and Stéphane Boissellie (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2002).

²¹⁸ René Noël, “À la recherche du village médiévale hier et aujourd'hui,” *Autour du “village”: Établissements humains, finages et communautés rurales entre Seine et Rhin (IVe–XIIIe siècles): Actes du colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve, 16–17 mai 2003*, éd. Jean-Marie Yante et Anne-Marie Bultot-Verleysen. Université catholique de Louvain. Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales. Textes, Études, Congrès, 25 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, 2010), 3–75; here 23. The subsequent translation is my own.

²¹⁹ See the contribution to this volume by Sherri Olson.

treatment of the farmer in Wernher der Gartenære's *Helmbrecht* (see above), or as we can also perceive in Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich* from ca. 1200, where the leprous lord Heinrich retires to the one farm where he knows that he is welcome despite his terrible appearance. After all, he had endowed that farmer with many privileges and lands, granting him even the status of a "vrîer bûman" (269; free farmer), elevating him above most other peasants at that time who continue to suffer many hardships, especially because they live under the rule of harsh and mean-spirited lords (273).

Above all, the nobleman Heinrich has freed him from any obligations to work for other lords, a common experience for farmers in their difficult existence being subject to many different masters in the complex feudal system (279–80). At the end of this utopian verse narrative, once Heinrich has been miraculously healed because of his inner conversion after he had realized the true beauty of life as a gift given by God, as represented by the peasant's daughter, who actually had been willing to die for Heinrich's sake to heal him from leprosy, the farmer experiences even more privileges. Heinrich is so grateful what has happened to him that he finally turns over all the land which the farmer manages as his own property, making him to a truly free man, almost equal to an aristocrat (1442–49). That, in turn, makes it possible for Heinrich to marry the young woman because she is a free woman, just as her parents were (1497).²²⁰

We are certainly dealing with an erotic scandal, since it would have been entirely unlikely and uncalled for that a high-ranking prince would choose a peasant's daughter as his bride, disregarding the wide range of other noble candidates. However, since this girl had proven to be a Christ-like figure, willing to sacrifice herself for her lord's recovery, and since we are here dealing with a metaphorical narrative in which the young woman might well be simply an icon of Heinrich's neglected or wounded soul, the narrative reaches a happy end.

Later we will also encounter the most problematic case of Griselda in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, but here I would like to establish quickly a huge yet meaningful connection to the early twentieth century when D. H. Lawrence published his famous novel, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (1928), although publication was suppressed in the United Kingdom until 1960. Here we face a most scandalous content, the erotic relationship between a woman from the aristocracy, Lady Chatterly (in real life: Ottoline Morrell), and a man from the lower class, a gamekeeper, Oliver Mellor. This novel became not only a key work during the sexual revolution of the 1960s, but it also served as landmark literary masterpiece to challenge most

²²⁰ Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich*, ed. Hermann Paul. 16th, newly rev. ed. by Kurt Gärtner. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 3 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996); see also my contribution to the present volume. For a good English trans., see *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson. Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

seriously the traditional social structure.²²¹ Rural space, eroticism, social criticism, and the liberating force of sexuality merge powerfully in Lawrence's novel, but it obviously had significant medieval and early-modern forerunners.

But let us not leave behind this particular aspect without confirming that the case of a prince marrying a peasant daughter actually happened at least once in the Middle Ages. The legendary Czech chronicler Dalimil—the author cannot be verified—reports in his work from the early fourteenth century (ca. 1308–1311) that the Bohemian Duke Udalrich (966–1034), or Ulrich, married a local peasant woman, Bozena, instead of a German princess because, as he explained to his irritated courtiers, an aristocratic woman speaking the German tongue would teach that language to her children, instead of Czech, which thus could endanger the realm altogether.²²²

This passage proves to be so exceptional and meaningful for our discussion that it seems certainly important enough to examine it a bit more closely through a close reading of the original Middle High German text—the Czech version is printed on the facing pages in the modern edition. The account tells us that while Duke Ulrich was hunting near the monastery of Postolopirtenses, he came across

²²¹ See the articles in *Critical Essays on D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Dennis Jackson and Fleda Brown Jackson. *Critical Essays on British Literature* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1988). For an excellent overview, see the article in *Wikipedia* online at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Chatterley%27s_Lover (last accessed on Oct. 4, 2011).

²²² *Rýjmovaná kronika česka: di tutsch kronik von Behemlant*, ed. J. Jireček. *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, 3 (Prague: Nákladem nadání Františka Palackého, 1882), 82–84. See also *Dalimils Chronik von Böhmen*, ed. Venceslav Hanka. *Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, XLVIII (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein, 1859), 96–97 (chapter 41). There are a number of smaller differences in spelling, however. This edition can now be found online in *Wikisource* at:

http://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=Seite:1859_Dalimils_Chronik_von_B%C3%B6hmen.djvu/1&action=edit&redlink=1 (last accessed on Nov. 1, 2011). As to this chronicle, which is

very hard to trace in our libraries, see Marie Bláhová, "Di tutsch kronik von Bhem lant," *The*

Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle, ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), vol. 1,

521–22. I discovered this reference in the book manuscript by Len Scales, *The Shaping of German*

Identity: Authority and Crisis, 1245–1414 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming),

while evaluating this new study. I am grateful to the publisher for providing me with a copy of

the manuscript. For further information on this Czech Prince Udalrich, or Ulrich, see

http://www.scottloan.net/web-content/Report%20009,%20Web%20Cards/ps04_323.html (last

accessed on Oct. 22, 2011). The Czech version has survived in three different versions, followed

by two German verse translations (between 1342 and 1346) and one version in prose (before 1444).

Vlastimil Brom, *Der deutsche Dalimil: Untersuchungen zur gereimten deutschen Übersetzung der*

alttschechischen Dalimil-Chronik (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2006). For the literary-historical

reception, see Walter Schamschula, *Geschichte der tschechischen Literatur*. Vol. I: *Von den Anfängen*

bis zur Aufklärungszeit. Bausteine zur Geschichte der Literatur bei den Slaven, 36.1 (Cologne and

Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 83–86. Now see also Jana Nechutová, *Die lateinische Literatur des*

Mittelalters in Böhmen, trans. from the Czech [into German] by Hildegard Boková and Václav Bok.

Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte, Neue Folge, Reihe A, 59 (Cologne,

Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), 160–61. More literature can be found there, n. 255.

a beautiful young woman, called Bosena (Bozena) who was barefoot and sleeveless—perhaps the chronicler intended to allude to the *pastourelle* tradition when he introduced this symbolic figure, symbolic especially for the Czech nationalism which the chronicler is preaching here for specific political and economic reasons.²²³ Ulrich is immediately smitten by her and does not hesitate one moment to marry her. As the narrator emphasizes, she struck him both through her physical attractiveness and, at the same time, her modesty, i.e., her noble behavior: “Se waz ein gar schon purin gnant, / sie het doby schemliche sit” (6–7; she was a truly beautiful peasant woman, and yet she displayed a modest behavior). Moreover, as we also learn, Bosena demonstrated great virtues, which reminds us altogether of Boccaccio’s Griselda figure.

Duke Ulrich’s princes grumbled, however, about his strange decision not to choose a German noble lady, or at least a woman of aristocratic descent. But their lord then teaches them a powerful lesson. His comments are so noteworthy and unusual in the medieval context that they deserve to be quoted at length:

Er sprach: “Er herrin, ir sullit horin!
 Gar ansichtig vrown vz den pauwerinn wern.
 Dy geburen nemen der virnemer tochtir,
 dy machtent vor alten richtum edel drotir,
 vnd oft straft dy armut dy gebursche edelkeit.
 Wir sin al komen von einem vatir her;
 der nennet sich edil, der vil silbirs hat.
 Dy edel mit der geburistheit gemiszchit stat.
 Secht darvm min wib Bosena!
 Vil mer wil ich lachin da
 mit einer bemischin puorin,
 wen eines fremden königes tochtir gewin.
 Einem iclichin ist daz hercze czu siner zcungin gruz,
 darvmb wirt ein vremde nummer min genoz,
 noch minen lutin wirt si nit getrwe.
 Fremdes gesinde wirt habin ein fromdein,
 min kinder wirt sy deutsch lerin
 vnd ir gewonheit virkerin.
 Dovon an der zcunge
 wirt ein groz zcweiunge,
 vnd dem lande czu hant
 ein recht virderbuize bekant.
 Ir herin, ir wiszit nit euwir wegirs,
 er habit mir min heirat vir wegir.

²²³ Alfred Thomas, *Anne’s Bohemia: Czech Literature and Society, 1310–1240*. Foreword by David Wallace. *Medieval Cultures*, 13 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 50–54.

Wo wolt er nemen tulmetschin.
 wan er stet vor minir frowen deuschin?" (13–38)

[He said: "Lords, listen to me!
 Peasant women turn into really beautiful ladies.
 The peasants marry the nobles' daughters,
 they created noble rulers in contrast to ancient nobles,
 and often poverty shames the boorish aristocracy.
 We all descend from one father;
 he who has much silver calls himself noble.
 The nobles display many boorish character traits.
 I rather prefer to laugh
 together with a Czech peasant woman
 than with the daughter of a foreign king (whom I might have won).
 Everyone enjoys speaking from his heart in his own tongue,
 wherefore a foreign woman will never become my wife,
 nor will she [ever] gain my people's love.
 A foreign woman will have foreign servants,
 she will teach my children the German language
 and change their [natural] behavior.
 Because of the difference in languages
 would develop a great conflict,
 and the country would then
 soon experience damage.
 My lords, you do not know what you are requesting,
 accept my wedding as a good blessing.
 Where would you find a translator,
 if you were to stand before my German wife?"]

Subsequently the chronicler simply continues with his genealogical overview, without returning to the critical issue of a peasant's daughter sitting on the throne with her husband, the Czech duke. Whether legendary or not, here we confront a most curious case where national identity and the ability to speak the native tongue overrule any concerns to find a bride which might fit the prince's social rank. It might be one of the earliest examples in Czech historiography of a burgeoning nationalism which favors native peasant women over foreign German princesses.

Occasionally we also hear of critical comments about the arrogance dominating the upper social classes who inappropriately despise and ridicule the rural population, as we have already observed in the comments by Hugo von Trimberg. The monk Bartholomew of Saint Fucien, also known as Reclus de Molliens, who lived in the region of Amiens during the first half of the thirteenth century and composed the treatise *Miserere* and the *Roman de Carité*, chastised the aristocrats in their behavior

and prejudice as to their own public esteem, warning them thereby that being a free man would not be *a priori* an aristocratic privilege.²²⁴

In general, however, it will remain a difficult task for historians, anthropologists, and archeologists to determine precisely how the rural population lived due to a definite lack of sources and evidence.²²⁵ After all, we cannot even claim that the peasants lived all under fairly similar economic conditions. Far from it; there were always remarkable social-economic differences, leading to a considerable class demarcation even within villages, especially when we can clearly detect those *meliores*, to whom obviously old Helmbrecht in Wernher's didactic narrative belonged.²²⁶ How to approach the task of learning more about the peasant class depends very much on one's own scholarly discipline, and there are, indeed, many unusual but effective paths, such as by means of studying sermon literature, in which many concerns by the parish priests about the bad behavior, sinfulness, and lack of piety of their flock were expressed.²²⁷ But then we also know much about medieval peasants through law books, such as the *Saxon's Mirror*,²²⁸ or through historical documents specifying prices for agrarian products, archeological data, chronicles, and indirect sources, including literary texts and art works.²²⁹

Much work still needs to be done in that area, and many new perspectives deserve to be considered in future research, insofar as technology, planting rhythms, resources, military protection, and climate also played major roles.²³⁰ And we also will have to pay much closer attention to the interactions between the peasants

²²⁴ Peter Dinzelbacher, *Europa im Hochmittelalter 1050–1250: Eine Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichte. Kultur und Mentalität* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2003), 141–42; cf. Evelyne Marie Gabrielle Maupas, *Etude sur les oeuvres du Renclus de Moliens (romans de "Carité" et de "Miserere")* (Fribourg, Switzerland: n. p., 1972).

²²⁵ Robert Delière, "La notion de village en ethnologie et ses rapports à l'histoire," *Autour du "village"* (see note 218), 77–83; here 81. See also the other contributions to this valuable volume.

²²⁶ W(erner) Rösener, "Bauer, Bauerntum," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 1, fasc. 8 (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1980), cols. 1563–76; esp. cols. 1567–58.

²²⁷ Aaron J. Gurjewitsch, *Mittelalterliche Volkskultur*, trans. from the Russian to German by Matthias Springer (1981; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987), 125–66.

²²⁸ *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Maria Dobozy. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). She emphasizes the enormous value of this law book as a "sensitive barometer of social values. The customs were grounded in the daily, material affairs of Saxon agrarian communities, and because they regulated land rights, community cooperation, and neighborly relations, they reveal a great deal about social priorities" (24).

²²⁹ See the various articles on specific aspects pertaining to medieval peasantry in vol. 1 of the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (see note 226), following Rösener's article.

²³⁰ Del Sweeney, *Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice, and Representation*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). See also Marcel Mazoyer and Laurence Roudart, *A History of World Agriculture: From the Neolithic Age to the Current Crisis*, trans. James H. Membrez (1997; New York: Monthly Review Press, 2006).

and the representatives of all other social classes. We know for sure that the relationships were never restful or harmonious, and ultimately the old world collapsed and gave way to a new one because of massive protests and revolutions, such as in France in 1789 and in Russia in 1918.²³¹

Surprisingly, we can find out much more about the peasant world in the Middle Ages than is commonly assumed because specialized research has uncovered a plethora of sources that yield extensive information, whether directly or indirectly. We can say much about patterns of peasant settlements and dwellings, clothing, food, and work, social structures even within peasant villages, the laws that ruled the peasant society, and about profound tensions and conflicts emerging among the peasants during the late Middle Ages. As Werner Rösener alerts us,

The medieval village community, often regarded as a stronghold of equality, harmony and peaceful social life, was not, in reality, a monolithic society of equals who valued the aims and goals of the community above their personal interests. The social composition of the peasantry in general and the village community in particular were highly diversified and consisted of a variety of different layers and levels.²³²

As to the situation in the late Middle Ages, we can observe that two developments joined hands. One development led to a deep sense of crisis as a result of the Black Death, many wars, religious conflicts, and changes in the population at large. The numerous revolts and uprisings among the peasants and the lower social classes in the urban centers powerfully reflected this profound feeling of anxiety and insecurity. The other development pertains to a general growth in economic wealth even among the peasantry. In Rösener's words: "there is good reason to believe that, on the whole, their standard of living improved, rather than worsened, during the late Middle Ages . . . most peasants probably suffered less than their ancestors. In any case, they held more land than before, and they had larger pastures for their cattle and sheep than at the beginning of the fourteenth century when land was in much shorter supply" (274).

²³¹ John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism: Peasants, Lords, and Legislators in the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Corinne Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants: Ruling Peasants: Village and Estate in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007). This topic proves to be huge, of course, and I cannot do justice to it here without running the risk of losing any focus in the further examination of the larger topic.

²³² Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages* (see note 216), 191.

26. Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring*

In many respects this rather amorphous, if not dialectical impression can be powerfully confirmed if we consult the famous allegorical and satirical romance, *Der Ring*, by the Constance public notary Heinrich Wittenwiler from ca. 1400.²³³ Since there is so much research on this work already, focusing on the poet's claim on veracity, the allegorical interpretation of the world, ethical and moral issues, sexual violence, and the lack of communication even in small-knit communities, it might be enough here to reflect only briefly on this text and its elaboration on the function of rural space. The satire is certainly directed against the peasant population, but ultimately Wittenwiler really intended *Der Ring* as an allegorical mirror of his world in its encyclopedic expanse. Stupidity, ignorance, lustfulness, wrath, envy, etc. dominate the lives of the peasant figures, and we could certainly read the romance as another mirror of the Seven Deadly Sins.²³⁴

The basic plot line addresses the love relationship between the young peasant Bertschi Triefnas (Bert with the Dripping Nose) and the maid Mätzli Rüerenzumpf (Mätzli Touch the Penis). Ultimately they can marry, and a major section of the text is dominated by general teachings important for young people who are about to establish a family on their own. But then a conflict erupts during the wedding festivities, and since these cannot be controlled and maintained, violence follows suit, and soon enough the village is involved in a veritable war against their neighbors, who had caused the disruption. Again, we hear of lengthy instructions, this time about how to wage a war, but they do not help the villagers since they are at the end completely defeated and killed down to the last person, except for the male protagonist, who can pretend to have lost his mind, while the opponents besiege him in an attic. Once he has witnessed the horrible Armageddon, including his dead wife, he withdraws into the Black Forest to lead the life of an hermit, yet without having really learned any lesson.²³⁵

²³³ Heinrich Wittenwiler, "*Der Ring*", herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Bernhard Sowinski. Helfant Texte, T 9 (Stuttgart: helfant edition, 1988); see also Heinrich Wittenwiler, *Der Ring*. Frühneuhochdeutsche / Neuhochdeutsch. Nach dem Text von Edmund Wießner ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und herausgegeben von Horst Brunner (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991); see also Eckhart Conrad Lutz, *Spiritualis fornicatio: Heinrich Wittenwiler, seine Welt und sein 'Ring'*. Konstanzer Geschichts- und Rechtsquellen, XXXII (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990); Albrecht Classen, "Heinrich Wittenwiler," *German Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation, 1280–1580*, ed. James Hardin and Max Reinhart. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 179 (Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1997), 326–31.

²³⁴ *The Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. Richard Newhauser (see note 172).

²³⁵ See, for example, Ulrich Gaier, *Satire. Studien zu Neidhart, Wittenwiler, Brant und zur satirischen Schreibart* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967); Winfried Schlaffke, *Heinrich Wittenweilers Ring: Komposition und Gehalt*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 50 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1969); Christoph Gruchot, *Heinrich Wittenwilers "Ring": Konzept und Konstruktion eines Lehrbuches*. Göppinger

The reader is confronted with a dense and detailed look into the rural space of a peasant population, though certainly refracted through the ironic and satirical perspective which the author consistently pursues. We follow events inside and outside of the village, we observe the young lover pursuing his beloved by day and night, when he even climbs on the roof of her parents' house. A village medical doctor figures quite prominently, and also a mean-spirited neighboring knight, Neidhart, who fights in the first section of the romance against Bertschi and his companions, though he resorts to deceptive strategies to hurt, if not kill, his peasant opponents. At the end when the war is about to begin, the Lappenhausen peasants request help from all kinds of parties, but the cities assemble and decide in unison to refrain from this conflict which they regard as foolish and dangerous at the same time. Considering the devastating outcome, this proves to be a wise move, and it underscores, once again, the significant distance between the urban and the rural world. After all, late-medieval literature is filled with examples of urban writers ridiculing peasants in every possible fashion, while positive depictions are rare, though they also exist.²³⁶

Wittenwiler presents all his peasant figures as vulgar, uninhibited, crude, violent, and ignorant. But considering how much we really have to understand his romance as a metaphor of this world at large, we recognize the importance of having the rural space available for fundamental discussions of ethical, moral, political, emotional, and even religious issues. In this regard the village and the rustics functioned as representatives of society at large, allowing the audience to laugh at them, when in reality the true object of mockery were the nobility and the urban population. This finds intriguing parallels in late-medieval Shrovetide plays and similar genres, such as by Hans Sachs (1494–1576).²³⁷

Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 475 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1988); Corinna Laude, *"Daz in swindelt in den sinnen . . .": Die Poetik der Perspektive bei Heinrich Wittenwiler und Giovanni Boccaccio*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 173 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2002); Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, *Irrsinn und Kolportage: Studien zum "Ring", zum "Lalebuch" und zur "Geschichtsklitterung"*. Literatur, Imagination, Realität, 39 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2006).

²³⁶ Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Schwankliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Martin Montanus, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof und Michael Lindener*. Koblenz-Landauer Studien zu Geistes-, Kultur- und Bildungswissenschaften, 4 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2009), 97–98.

²³⁷ Horst Brunner, *Hans Sachs. Auf den Spuren der Dichter und Denker durch Franken*, 10 (Gunzenhausen: Schrenk-Verlag, 2009); Albrecht Classen, "Women, Wives, and Marriage in the World of Hans Sachs," *Daphnis* 32, 3–4 (2003): 491–521.

27. Rural Space and the Supportive Peasant Figure in *Queen Sibille* (Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken)

While many courtly texts present rather sarcastic and satirical views of the peasant, and interact with the rural space only fleetingly, one late-medieval prose novel, extant in Spanish, French, and German, offers quite different perspectives. In the first half of the thirteenth century the Cistercian Monk Alberic of Trois-Fontaines (d. after 1252) included an account about Charlemagne's wives in his *Chronica*, which he based on Einhard's (d. 840) ninth-century *Vita Karoli Magni* (chapter 18). This included especially the report about Sibille, whom the king expelled from his court. She had been the daughter of the King of the Langobards, Desiderius.²³⁸

Nevertheless, in the late-medieval prose versions, we are certainly far removed from historical conditions and face an intriguing fictional account of the suffering wife viciously pursued by her irrational husband, very much in the vein of the literary traditions dealing with Bertha, Crescentia, and Genoveva. Numerous versions evolved out of the text created by Alberic, beginning with the Goliard poet Schondoch's *Diu Künigin von Frankreich und der ungetriuwe marschalk* (early fourteenth century). In Italy the composers of the *Storie Nerbonensi* incorporated references to this Queen Sibille. At the end of the fourteenth or in the early fifteenth century a Spanish prose version appeared, a *Cuento*. In 1437 the Countess Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken rendered a French version, a *chanson de geste*, probably *Macaire ou la Reine Sebile*, into German. She was followed by a French compiler who created a cycle of prose versions focusing on Garin de Monglane around 1450. We know of yet another French writer, Jean des Preis dit d'Outremeuse (1338–1400) from Liège who worked with this material.²³⁹

²³⁸ For a parallel case, dealing with Charlemagne's mother, Berthe, see the contribution to this volume by Rosa A. Perez, dealing with *Berte aus grans pies*.

²³⁹ *Der Roman von der Königin Sibille in drei Prosafassungen des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. Mit Benutzung der nachgelassenen Materialien von Fritz Burg, ed. Hermann Tiemann. Veröffentlichungen aus der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, 10 (Hamburg: Dr. Ernst Hauswedell, 1977), 9–20; for critical approaches, see Ute von Bloh, *Ausgerenkte Ordnung: Vier Prosaepen aus dem Umkreis der Gräfin Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken: "Herzog Herpin", "Loher und Maller", "Huge Scheppel", "Königin Sibille"*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 119 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002). Much valuable material relevant for our topic can be found in *Zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich: Elisabeth von Lothringen, Gräfin von Nassau-Saarbrücken*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs and Hans-Walter Herrman, together with Gerhard Sauder. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung e. V., 34 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2002). For late-medieval and early-modern German adaptations of this text, see Sibylle Jefferis, "The Cronica von der Königin von Frankreich: The Prose Adaptation of Schondoch's Novella," *Nu lôn' ich iu der gäbe: Festschrift for Francis G. Gentry*, ed. Ernst Ralf Hintz. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 693 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2003), 159–72;

After Charlemagne has expelled his wife from court, firmly convinced that she had committed adultery with an ugly black dwarf—a ridiculous assumption, but crucial for the plot development predicated on this poor woman's long suffering, considering that it will take her many years to find justice, to convince her husband that she was completely innocent, and to be accepted again as his wife—Sibille rides off, only accompanied by the loyal knight Abrye von Mondidire, reaching an idyllic forest setting where she takes a rest. This happens only in the German version, whereas in the Spanish the travelers stop only in various cities on their journey. In the French version we are not given any details pertaining to the spatial features, while Elisabeth paid great attention to those. Having spent the whole day in the saddle, Sibille and her protector reach an open space in the forest where a fountain provides fresh water.

The entire setting clearly reflects the *locus amoenus*, though, as we have to realize soon after, the illusion does not last long: “Als sye ein wile in dem gewelde ridden / da ersahen sye gar eynen schonen lustlichen bornen” (127; After they had ridden for a while in the forest, they espied a beautiful and delightful fountain). The short rest there is soon interrupted because one of the evil courtiers under Charlemagne, Marckair, has arrived and tries to rape the queen, but he has to fight Abrye first, whom he soon can kill because he lacks proper armor (129). In the meantime Sibille has escaped and rushes through the forest, disregarding whether there is free passage through the shrubbery and bushes or not. The branches hit her so hard that her face is quickly covered with blood, perhaps a direct allusion to Christ's Passion? Her suffering at the hand of her husband and the evil men at the court make her to an innocent victim, which the wild forest writes, so to speak, into her face.

28. Collaboration of the Good Peasant with the Noble Lady

Elisabeth revisits the same issue as formulated in Wolfram's *Titirel*, although now it is the Queen whose face is covered with bloody marks reflecting her attempt to escape from the rapists. Her wounds also signal her innocent suffering, just as in the case of Christ's Passion.²⁴⁰ In the meantime Markair manages to kill Abrye, but he is then attacked by the latter's loyal dog, who will eventually exact the just

eadem, “Das Meisterlied von der Königin von Frankreich: Ihre Geschichte in Text und Bildern,” *Current Topics in Medieval German Literature: Texts and Analyses (Kalamazoo Papers 2000–2006)*, ed. eadem. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 748 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2008), 117–50.

²⁴⁰ Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood. Religion & Culture in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 16–22, 46–48, et passim. See also Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

revenge, forcing the evil knight into a kind of duel in which God helps the dog win, which leads to Markair's execution.²⁴¹

In the forest scene, however, the evil courtier first cuts off the head of Abrye's horse, but fails to kill the dog, a most loyal animal that displays incredibly human characteristics.²⁴² Subsequently he searches the entire forest for the queen but cannot detect her, which prevents him from raping her.²⁴³ Sibille flees from Markair for the whole night and eventually, in the early morning, reaches the forest's limit. Although she has been saved from being raped and murdered, she is still desperate, not knowing what to do, not having eaten for two days. In that moment she encounters the peasant Warakir who at first treats her somewhat roughly, but soon enough turns into her most ardent and loyal supporter for the rest of the entire story. He even temporally abandons his own family because Sibille is in greater need. Warakir sends his ass loaded with firewood on his way back home without guiding him, and thus makes his wife believe that he has been killed or imprisoned (131).

The poet does not elaborate on this conflictual situation at this point and solves it only much later in the course of events, but this should not concern us, however, here. More interesting proves to be the subsequent problem which Warakir runs into when they enter a city, where the city dwellers ridicule and mock him, challenging him seriously as to his presumption to lead this beautiful and noble looking lady. In order to protect the peasant, Sibille pretends that he is her husband, but later, when the inn-keeper talks with Warakir in private, he admits that he is only her servant and she is a lady on her way to a pilgrimage site. Since they have run out of money, so he pretends, they look so poor, but, as he insists, she is of a noble family.

Sibille knows that she must return to her father, the Emperor of Constantinople, so they do not stay in the city for long. They sell her mule and her valuable clothing, and so can continue their journey toward Cologne, getting ready for her delivery of a child, the future successor of Charlemagne, his son Louis the Pious (132–33). Subsequently, Warakir emerges as a true hero, helping his queen in many different and difficult situations, while most members of the noble world, apart from a few subdued supporters, make every effort to undermine the king's authority. The author Elisabeth projects, in an amazing development of events, the intimate collaboration of queen and peasant and presents also a number of other

²⁴¹ Neumann, *Der gerichtliche Zweikampf* (see note 182), 191–98; Albrecht Classen, "The Dog in German Courtly Literature: The Mystical, the Magical, and the Loyal Animal," *Fauna and Flora in the Middle Ages* (see note 127), 67–86.

²⁴² *Tiere als Freunde* (see note 129), 261–72; Albrecht Classen, "The Dog in German Courtly Literature" (see note 241).

²⁴³ Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape* (see note 137), 188–94.

people from the lowest social class, including a thief, as some of the most important helpers in Sibille's case.

But even at King Charlemagne's court we notice some important figures who help solve the criminal conflict involving the entire party of jealous and obstructionist courtiers, that is, traitors who seriously operate against the king, resorting to lying, deception, spreading of rumors, and the like. At the end of the duel between Markair and the dog, one of his relatives, Galleran, rushes onto the ring, trying to kill the dog, against all rules. When Charlemagne observes that, he yells out that anyone who would catch Galleran and bring him as a prisoner would receive hundred marks of silver. This attracts a throng of young men who all throw themselves upon the knight, who defends himself quite energetically, until finally "ein groß gebüre" (141; a huge peasant) arrives and beats him down with his club and drags the unconscious body to the king who immediately grants him the reward.

We are not informed where the peasant came from, or what happens with him afterwards. But he is one of those who attended the great event of the duel, and his deed helps justice to be restored, although he fights only with a club, the typical weapon normally attributed to giants. But insofar as Galleran, like Markair, had already broken all rules of courtliness, this crude and violent act solves the issue and destroys the power of the entire gang of traitors, especially because the dog subsequently jumps back into the ring and finally overcomes his own enemy, who then confesses all his sins. As a punishment both he and Galleran are hanged, but the poor dog subsequently also dies, albeit for truly noble reasons, since he starves himself to death grieving over the loss of his lord. Significantly, the dog does not simply pass his last days at the court; instead he returns to Abrye's grave and mourns so long until he succumbs to his pain and is then buried near the graveyard.

Elisabeth repeatedly returns to the world of the peasants and explores the significance of rural space because both served her exceedingly well as critical counterposts to the corrupt and unworthy court of nobles. Warakir, for instance, ten years after Sibille's son has been born (Ludewig, or the later Louis the Pious), finally requests permission to return home and to visit his family. Once he has arrived there, no one recognizes him, so he can observe his wife's and his children's behavior. They are all terribly impoverished and have to go begging to survive. Nevertheless, when Warakir, pretending to be a poor stranger, requests his wife to let him sleep with her, she vehemently protests and threatens to alarm her neighbor because she is married and wants to uphold her honor, irrespective of her low status and miserable living conditions.

When Warakir observes his wife's adamant posture and resolute defensiveness, he laughs out loud, not in contempt, but rather with pride and joyfulness because he realizes the high ethical principles by which she lives (159). As proof that he is

really her husband, he refers to the ass that had started to make loud noise once it had returned home and had realized that its true master was finally there again (159).

At the very end, when Charlemagne has finally recognized how wrong he had been, how much he had been deceived by the traitors at the court, that he had been misled by deeply-seated jealousy and male insecurity, and that he hence really ought to welcome Sibille back as his wife, his son Ludewig speaks up on behalf of Warakir and emphasizes the long selfless service that the latter had rendered to the queen: "Er hat myner mutter alczu wol gewartet / bis vff diesen hütigen dag / Lieber herre dar vmb bidden ich üch / das ir yme verzyhent was er wider uch gedann hat" (172; He has always taken care of my mother until the present day. Dear Lord, I ask you that you forgive him what he has done against you). This happens, of course, and we can only assume that Warakir enjoys a pleasant life from then on, although the narrator no longer comments on him, concluding only with a few observations on the happiness which the royal couple then enjoyed.

Elisabeth indicates with her *Königin Sibille* how influential a good person can be, irrespective of his or her social background. Warakir, although only a peasant, puts a vast number of the courtiers under Charlemagne to shame, and emerges as an admirable, central figure who is critically involved in the rescue of the queen and in helping her for the next decade to overcome all of her opponents and to establish the reunification of the royal couple.

Whereas most previous authors viewed the rural world more with contempt and ridicule than with respect and admiration, here disregarding Hartmann von Aue with his *Der arme Heinrich*, Elisabeth argued strongly in favor of discriminating among people not according to their social status, but according to their character and inner nobility, which might also be a significant reflection of extensive socio-economic improvements among the rural population, at least in the late Middle Ages.²⁴⁴

29. Exploration of Rural Space in Sixteenth-Century Literature: *Till Eulenspiegel* and Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*

As George Huppert comments, though mostly from the perspective of the early-modern age, "Property became the measure of all things as soon as servitude vanished. One of the most striking characteristics of early modern rural society was the arrangement of households in a hierarchy dominated by a small group of

²⁴⁴ Johannes Grabmayer, *Europa im späten Mittelalter 1250–1500: Eine Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichte. Kultur und Mentalität* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2004), 18–23.

farmers.”²⁴⁵ However, there was also a strong trend toward impoverishment because the farmers were increasingly dependent on urban creditors, land owners, and tax collectors, although the agricultural development all over Europe was quite noticeable—this at least in Languedoc and in Lombardy.²⁴⁶

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German verse narratives (*mæren*) and jest accounts (*Schwänke*) contain an ever growing number of specific scenes involving peasants, often being ridiculed, but commonly also presented as rich and independent members of their rural communities, hence emerging, in a variety of ways, as economic and social risers and challengers to the wealthy urban class. Perhaps especially for that reason we hear quite commonly of the foolish or the smart actions by the village leaders (“Schultheiß”), and we are regularly invited to laugh about greedy, stupid, and ignorant peasants, though opposite characterizations also occur quite often.²⁴⁷ In fact, this laughter easily proves to be a substitute for laughter about members of all the other social classes as well.

We discover this (re)newed interest in the peasant population, the village community, and hence in rural space remarkably also in the famous collection of jest narratives focusing on the most unique and dare-devilish Till Eulenspiegel, probably composed by the Brunswick Hermen Bote (printed in 1515).²⁴⁸ First of all, this cunning and amazingly unabashed jester is born in a village; throughout his life he interacts with people from all social classes and backgrounds, hence also, and surprisingly often, with peasants, but these do not necessarily fare better or worse than craftsmen, princes, priests, inn-keepers, university professors, and others in the way that the jester makes fun of them and laughs about their own ridiculous life styles, values, and ideas.

Most significantly, Till Eulenspiegel operates successfully in fooling his contemporaries both in the village and at court, both at the university and in the craftsman’s workshop, and no one can ever defend him- or herself effectively against his jokes and deceptions, so that the audience is simply forced to laugh

²⁴⁵ George Huppert, *After the Black Death: A Social History of Early Modern Europe*. 2nd ed. Interdisciplinary Studies in History (1986; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 70.

²⁴⁶ Huppert, *After the Black Death* (see note 245), 74–75.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, the large number of *Schwänke* in Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof, *Wendunmuth*, vol. 1, ed. Hermann Oesterley. Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, XCV (1869; Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1980), nos. 93, 94, 95, 109, 136, 141, 145–47, 164, 168, et passim. See also Georg Wickram, *Das Rollwagenbüchlein*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff. Georg Wickram: Sämtliche Werke, 7 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), nos. 9–10, 22, 28, 39, 45, 50, 62, 64, 100, et passim. Cf. Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Schwankliteratur* (see note 236), 97–98. As to the epistemological function of laughter at large and in a variety of cases, see the contributions to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. A. Classen (see note 152).

²⁴⁸ *Ein kurtzweilig Lesen von Til Ulenspiegel*. Nach dem Druck von 1515 mit 87 Holzschnitten, ed. Wolfgang Lindow. Rev. and bibliographically expanded ed. (1966; Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978).

both about his actions and words and about his poor, mostly not really sympathetic victims. But when they laugh they really laugh about themselves, even if they might not want to admit that in the concrete situation. When Eulenspiegel finds employment as a sacristan with a priest, the latter holds his position in a village church (twelfth narrative, or *histori*). But then we find the protagonist operating equally comfortably at the university, in a city market, at court, and at other locations, which signals how much human folly is not limited to any particular space or social class — one of the essential insights we can always learn from satirical literature.²⁴⁹

In the twenty-sixth *histori*, Eulenspiegel buys some soil from a farmer so as to defy the death-threat by the Duke of Lüneburg. He digs himself into the pile of dirt and thus defends himself successfully against the latter because he can claim freedom and independence while sitting on his cart with that free soil — a remarkable reflection on the origin of individual freedom even by farmers against all claims by their lords. In fact, the duke knows no valid counter-argument and only threatens Eulenspiegel that he will have him executed the next time if he does not immediately leave his country with his horse and cart.

The protagonist makes fun of the village population as much as of the members of the universities or the urban communities. In the thirtieth *histori*, for instance, he claims to be a man who only says the truth, and then pretends that he can wash furs. He does not claim anything else, and does not outline how well those furs would be washed. But all women in the village believe that he would be able to accomplish what they imagine, and not what he has stated. So Eulenspiegel receives all their old furs, boils them in hot water, and then sends the women and children to the woods to fetch some wood from linden trees to accomplish his task. As soon as he is alone, however, he tosses the boiling pots into the fire and escapes, and thus pokes his usual fun at these credulous peasant women. However, the women do not prove to be more ignorant or credulous than anyone else whom Eulenspiegel ever might encounter. Rural space, in other words, gains just as much importance as urban space because stupidity, ignorance, gullibility, and simple-mindedness know no bounds and affect all people of all social classes, genders, ages, and races.

²⁴⁹ Barbara Könniker, *Satire im 16. Jahrhundert: Epoche – Werke – Wirkung*. Arbeitsbücher zur Literaturgeschichte (Munich: Beck, 1991); for the history of research on *Ulenspiegel*, or *Till Eulenspiegel*, see Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch: A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, NY, Peterborough, ON, and Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 185–212; for the identification of Hermann Bote as the author of *Dil Ulenspiegel*, see Herbert Blume, “Hermann Bote – Autor des Eulenspiegelbuches?: Zum Stand der Forschung,” id., *Hermann Bote: Braunschweiger Stadtschreiber und Literat: Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 15 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2009), 211–35.

Rural space also figures prominently in the narrative framework of Marguerite de Navarre's (1492–1549) *Heptaméron*, first printed in 1558 under a different title, and then, for a second time, in 1559 with the title as we know it today.²⁵⁰ The devisants or intratextual storytellers are first depicted as visitors fleeing from a spa in the town of Cauterets in the Pyrenees, a short distance southwest of Lourdes. Because of a mighty thunderstorm and resulting flooding everywhere, all the tourists and patients try to escape and find a way home. However, many actually die in the desperate effort, whereas a small group of ten people—the future storytellers—find refuge in a monastery. There they have to wait for ten days until a bridge has been reconstructed, so they spend their time telling each other stories.²⁵¹

The extradiegetic narrator offers a most impressive account of the natural catastrophe, with the torrential flooding in which some people drown, with wild animals that attack others, and with the rough terrain which they all have to cross. The account about how the old and very religious lady Oisille, a widow, manages to survive the enormous hardship, might suffice to illustrate how much Marguerite delighted in giving a very detailed and impressionistic image of the wild surroundings of the rural landscape in the Pyrenees:

She resolved not to let the treacherous roads frighten her, and made her way to the abbey of Our Lady at Sarrance . . . Eventually, she reached her destination, but only after struggling through rugged and hostile terrain. Indeed, so arduous were the climbs with which she was confronted, that in spite of her age and weight, she was obliged for the most part to go on foot. But the most tragic thing was that most of her horses and servants died on the way, so that by the time she arrived at Sarrance she was accompanied only by one man and one woman.²⁵²

The other members of the future story-telling party also go through hair-raising experiences, either having to fend off robbers and bandits, or having barely

²⁵⁰ *L'Heptaméron*, ed. Michel François (Paris: Garnier Classiques, 1964). Unless otherwise noted, the English translations used here are from *The Heptameron*, trans. Paul A. Chilton (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1984). For a recent critical investigation, see Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, "Laughing Out Loud in the *Heptaméron*: A Reassessment of Marguerite de Navarre's Ambivalent Humor," *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen (see note 152), 603–19.

²⁵¹ There is, of course, much research on the *Heptaméron*; see, for instance, the contributions to *Critical Tales: New Studies of the Heptameron and Early Modern Culture*, ed. John D. Lyons and Mary B. McKinley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), but the specific treatment of nature and rough wilderness in the mountains has not yet attracted enough significant attention.

²⁵² Marguerite de Navarre, *The Heptameron* (see note 250), 61. For a discussion of natural catastrophes in the Middle Ages, especially as described in Marguerite's work, see Albrecht Classen, "Consequences of Bad Weather in Medieval Literature: From *Apollonius of Tyre* to Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*," *arcadia* 45.1 (2010): 3–20. More broadly, see Jean-Pierre Leguay, *Les catastrophes au Moyen Âge*. Les classiques Gisserot de l'histoire ([Paris]: Éditions Jean-Paul Gisserot, 2005).

survived a failed attempt to cross a river's torrent (Simontaut, 64). Notably, serving as the strong opposite of the criminals, a good shepherd emerges as the rescuer of one of the future story-tellers.

In another case a wild beast had sprung on the scene, here a bear who kills all the male servants, which gives the two ladies enough time to escape to the monastery (62–63). Although all of the members of this unique party had to endure terrible suffering in the uproar of nature, they soon enough find peace and tranquility in the monastic setting and can turn their minds to God and also to the aesthetic appeal of nature. Madame Oisille encourages them, therefore, to adopt a religious attitude:

' . . . I believe that if, each morning, you give one hour to reading, and then, during mass, say your prayers devoutly, you will find even in this wilderness all the beauty a city could afford. For, a person who knows God will find all things beautiful in Him, and without Him all things will seem ugly. So I say to you, if you would live in happiness, heed my advice.'²⁵³ (67)

This proves to be, of course, a direct parallel to the setting in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which is the obvious foil for Marguerite's *Heptaméron*,²⁵⁴ but for us what matters is the strong emphasis on nature being both life-threatening and life-giving, in our case leading to the creation of the collection of these short narratives. But let us not ignore the strong differences as well. While the storytellers in Boccaccio's text flee from the pestilence stricken city and find refuge on their pleasant estates in the countryside, those in Marguerite's collection of tales "take up the pastime of storytelling, [and] they do so specifically to remind themselves of their friends at court and of the society from which they are separated."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, both authors indicate the transparency of space, that is, rural, urban, and courtly, and considering both of their great interest in offering a highly

²⁵³ Cf. Carol Thyssell, *The Pleasure of Discernment: Marguerite de Navarre as Theologian*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁵⁴ Michael Randall, "Teaching the Rhetoric of the Battle of the Sexes: Dialogues in and between the *Heptameron* and the *Decameron*," *Approaches to Teaching Marguerite de Navarre's Heptameron*, ed. Colette H Winn. Approaches to Teaching World Literature (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2007), 181–85.

²⁵⁵ Thyssell, *The Pleasure of Discernment* (see note 253), 63. She continues: "In the *Heptaméron* . . . the flood that traps the travelers has proved unpleasant, but it, like other natural disasters, is to be expected and endured rather than escaped. This is possible for Marguerite de Navarre's devisants because they clearly understand themselves to be in the hands of a good and gracious God who has actively brought them through such disasters in the past and can be trusted to do so again" (64). I would disagree with the first part of her reflections because the disaster in the mountains is exactly what it is, a catastrophe, and many of the travelers die in its wake. But Thyssell is certainly correct that the devisants only need to spend their waiting period patiently, filled with narration, until they can safely return home. See also the comments by Nicolino Applauso on the world of rural space in Boccaccio's *Decameron* in his contribution to this volume.

diverse, if not cosmopolitan or panoramic view of their society and world, rural space proves to be important for them as well, just as in the case of Geoffrey Chaucer (*Canterbury Tales*) or Poggio Bracciolini (*Fascetiae*), or any other major late-medieval and early-modern compiler and author of tales (Johannes Pauli, Jörg Wickram, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof, Martin Montanus, et al.).²⁵⁶

However, in only very few of the stories by Marguerite do we encounter rural scenes or settings, and even peasant figures rarely emerge, with the exception of a mule-driver in day 1, story twenty-seven, or a ferry-woman in story five also of the first day. Otherwise, the vast majority of accounts take place at court, in the city, or in a monastery.²⁵⁷ Only once do we hear of a village setting, in story twenty-nine, during the third day, where the wife of a rich farmer has an affair with the local village priest. We can only presume that there are significant marital problems for her since the farmer is described as old, and apparently cannot create children with her (perhaps because of his impotence).

The husband is described as “dull” and “old,” hence “never suspected a thing” (314). Nevertheless, one day he almost catches the couple *in flagrante*, though the priest manages to hide just in time in the loft before the farmer’s arrival. The wife takes care of her husband, and makes him drunk so that he falls asleep by the fire. Accidentally, while the lover is peeking below in the room to see whether he might be able to escape, he suddenly falls down by accident and so wakes up the farmer. Quick-witted, the priest immediately comes up with a good explanation, “‘Ah, here’s your winnowing basket, neighbour’” (314), and thus departs without delay. The farmer does not see through the ruse, but angrily complains: “‘Very rough way of returning something you’ve borrowed,’ he growled. ‘I thought the house was falling down’” (315).

Up to that point the traditional perception of the dull and coarse farmer is repeated, and the story would elicit only some polite laughter from the audience since the theme and concept is so familiar in late-medieval literature.²⁵⁸ After all,

²⁵⁶ Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos* (see note 162); Robert J. Clements and Joseph Gibaldi, *Anatomy of the Novella: The European Tale Collection from Boccaccio and Chaucer to Cervantes* (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

²⁵⁷ As far as I can tell, scholarship has hardly paid attention to the important concept of space in the *Heptaméron*. See the contributions to *Approaches to Teaching Marguerite de Navarre’s Heptaméron*. *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2007).

²⁵⁸ Birgit Beine, *Der Wolf in der Kutte: Geistliche in den Mären des deutschen Mittelalters*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 2 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1999); see also Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, “The Sexual Lives of Medieval Norman Clerics: A New Perspective on Clerical Sexuality,” *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 3 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 471–83.

there is the old husband, the young and discontented wife, and the sex-starved priest. However, we must not ignore the other discourse pertaining to the positive aspects of rural life which emerges subsequently.²⁵⁹ Finally, one of the major features of the *Heptaméron* consists of the complex debates about the individual stories that always follow after each one, where major points about gender, religion, and social classes are raised, and so here as well.²⁶⁰ Geburon (supposed to be Charles de Coucy) opines, for instance, that simple folks can be as much driven by evil intent as educated and upper-class people. In fact, he goes one step further: "On the contrary, they're a good deal worse. Just look at the thieves, murderers, sorcerers, counterfeiterers and people of that kind" (315).

Parlemente expresses her surprise that farmers can even experience such a subtle emotion as love, an attitude which Andreas Capellanus had similarly formulated hundreds of years before that in his treatise *De amore* (ca. 1190).²⁶¹ However, Saffredent, one of the men, corrects her by saying that the story in question did not address love in its esoteric and spiritual dimensions, but centered on physical sexual pleasures, pure and simple. Nevertheless, he then embarks on a different discourse that we could identify as based on the concept of the noble savage, or at least on the ideal of rusticity:

'... True, poor folk don't have the wealth or the same marks of distinction that we do, but they do have freer access to the commodities of Nature. Their food may not be quite so delicate, but they have better appetites, and they get more nourishment on coarse bread than we do on our delicate diets. They don't have fine beds and linen like we do, but they have better sleep and deeper rest than we. They don't have fine ladies with their make-up and elegant clothes like the ones we idolize, but they have their pleasure more often than we do, and they don't need to worry about wagging tongues, except perhaps for the birds and animals who happen to see them. [In short], everything that we have, they lack, and everything we lack, they have in abundance' (315–16).

It might be difficult to grasp the specific connection between this exchange of opinions and the actual story because there the young woman simply looks for ways to gain sexual gratification, whereas she does not pursue any amatory goals. The exchange among the storytellers, by contrast, examines social values, love, ethical issues, and the differences in life styles between aristocrats and farmers.

²⁵⁹ See also the contribution to this volume by Nicolino Applauso.

²⁶⁰ Elizabeth C. Zegura, "True Stories and Alternative Discourses: The Game of Love in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*," *Discourses on Love, Marriage, and Transgression in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 278 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 351–68; esp. 357–59.

²⁶¹ Andreas aulæ regiae capellanus, *De amore: Libri tres*. Text based on the edition by E. Trojel. Trans. with notes and an epilogue by Fritz Peter Knapp (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), Book I, ch. XI, p. 370–72: "De amore rusticorum."

Saffredent does not go as far as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) would go with his *Émile, ou De l'éducation* (1762) or his earlier *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755).²⁶² However, he clearly voices criticism of the degenerate culture of the aristocracy and indicates how much simple folk can enjoy a much better life than the rich and powerful because they are closer to nature and can take advantage of a natural lifestyle. Do we perceive here a kind of 'naturalism' *avant la lettre*? Even if this might go too far, we can certainly emphasize how much already in the premodern world the idea of nature as being a safe haven from the moral decline in and by (courtly or urban) society was of relevance. As to the purity of fulfilled love possible only in unspoiled nature, we only would have to refer back to the famous poem by Walther von der Vogelweide, "Under der linden," to discover significant thematic connections, although Marguerite was certainly not familiar with this Middle High German poet.

Insofar as this volume is not specifically targeting 'the peasant' in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, we cannot pursue this social-economic aspect much further at this point.²⁶³ Instead, we have to keep in mind how much rural space and human life as it takes place there intimately interact with each other.²⁶⁴ Our focus has mostly rested therefore on the lives of peasants, on their presentation in literature and the arts, but then also, and this perhaps most intensively, on nature itself and its perception in the premodern age. The critical questions always prove to be, and this certainly well until today, where the border between human and natural space runs, and whether we can really draw a very specific line separating both spheres. When does a garden-like landscape turn into wilderness? What does the transgression, or move from the domesticated garden into the wild forest, for instance, or the ascent to a mountain, indicate about the history of mentality at large?²⁶⁵ Rural space thus proves to be a critical area of human history as well, a

²⁶² Laurence D. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1999); Joel J. Kupperman, *Theories of Human Nature* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2010).

²⁶³ See, however, Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 120).

²⁶⁴ But see Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 120), 204–23. As valuable as his compilation of specific examples of good, noble, and virtuous peasants in medieval literature might be, there are a number of rather problematic readings, such as of Hartmann von Aue's "Der arme Heinrich." For further discussions of that tale, see above.

²⁶⁵ Günther E. Thiery, "Natur/Umwelt: Antike" (641–48); Harry Kühnel, together with Peter Dinzelbacher, "Natur/Umwelt: Mittelalter" (648–68); Rolf P. Sieferle, "Natur/Umwelt: Neuzeit" (668–80), *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte* (see note 6); for Boccaccio, see Sebastian Neumeister, "Annäherung an die Natur: Bilder der Landschaft bei Boccaccio" (131–48); for Enea Silvio Piccolomini, see Arnold Esch, "Das Erlebnis der Landschaft bei Enea Silvio Piccolomini/Pius II." (149–60), *'Landschaft im Mittelalter? – Augenschein und Literatur*, ed. Jens Pfeffer. *Das Mittelalter:*

kind of society's extension, or a border where colonizing efforts always knock on the door. That space has always proven to be the critical testing ground, a profound challenge, which we now begin to explore more in detail.

We can and must write human history by way of always keeping an eye on the interrelationship between human society and the natural environment, whether this involves only physical or also metaphysical dimensions.²⁶⁶ After all, human life depends on all the natural resources, on appropriate climatic conditions, and hence also on protections from excessive natural forces and dangerous creatures (animals, reptiles, bacteria, viruses, etc.).²⁶⁷ Actually, we continue to struggle with these issues until today, and even our best preparations and defense constructions can fail or break down, not to speak of our being very subject to attacks by illness, normally the result of bacterial or viral infections. Natural catastrophes have deeply affected human life throughout time, so focusing on earthquakes, massive forest fires, droughts, flooding, etc., all threatening to destroy the countryside and to wipe out cities and villages, offers powerful analytical lenses to comprehend the close relationship between all people and rural space.²⁶⁸

The degree to which man has been able to control nature, or at least to stem its massive forces in order to carve out a little niche of human life, can be regarded as an excellent gauge of human history at large. Of course, as a consequence of ecocriticism we have also learned to question the concept of 'control' because only the harmonious, that is, respectful interaction between people and nature promises, as countless examples have indicated, both in past and present, the survival of the human race. This struggle to find a constructive approach to rural space began on day one of human existence, and it deeply determined all cultural and economic history ever since.

30. The Testimony of Late-Medieval Art Once Again

The extent to which the approach to rural space has always reflected an ongoing and changing process finds most vivid expression in the history of art. To conclude our reflections, I would like to turn first to the famous *Livre de la chasse* (Hunting

Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung 16.1 (2011).

²⁶⁶ Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*. The Wiles Lectures Given at the queen's University of Belfast, 2006 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁶⁷ Jacques Berlioz, *Catastrophes naturelles et calamités au Moyen Âge* (see note 198). He includes chapters both on natural catastrophes, such as epidemics, floods, earthquakes, cold weather, etc.), and on attacks by wolves, flooding, and fear of unknown terrains; see also Jean-Pierre Leguay, *Les catastrophes au Moyen Âge* (see note 252).

²⁶⁸ Christian Rohr, *Extreme Naturereignisse im Ostalpenraum: Naturerfahrung im Spätmittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit*. Umwelthistorische Forschungen, 4 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

Book) of Gaston Phébus, Count of Foix (Bibliothèque nationale, Mfr. 616), begun on May 1, 1387, and finished in 1389.²⁶⁹ It is one of the most famous hunting books from the entire Middle Ages, and bears, in many ways, fascinating parallels with Frederick II's equally famous Falcon Book in its interest in and knowledge about animals or birds, respectively.²⁷⁰ Especially hunting with falcons and other birds of prey was one of the most highly regarded aristocratic sports; not surprisingly, courtly love poets therefore referred to the falcon as a symbol of love in many different forms.²⁷¹ As much as the illustrators of Gaston's book relied on traditional elements borrowed from model books, as far as the shape and design of plants, trees, meadows, bushes, fences, etc. might be concerned, here we are witnesses to an amazing exploration of natural details, especially with a focus on hunting animals and hunting prey. The settings are staged, of course, and there is no realistic background, but we are given the full privilege of partaking in the understanding and perception of rural space from the point of view of a noble hunter. As much as Gaston's illustrators made their best effort to provide as much specific detail about the animals in their miniatures, as much they also made sure to be as concrete and meticulous regarding weapons, hunting strategies, traps, fences, and a variety of rural settings in the forest, on the open meadow, and in the fields.

As a side note here, hunting was often discussed by other authors, such as the Spanish Duke Juan Manuel (1282–1348), since it was one of the central pastimes of medieval and early-modern nobility, and his *Libro de la caza* (ca. 1325) would lend itself well here for a comparative study.²⁷² In this context we then should also consider the famous book on hunting with birds of prey by Emperor Frederick II, his *De arte venandi cum avibus* (ca. 1241–1248). The accuracy with which the

²⁶⁹ Jacqueline A. Stuhmiller, in her contribution to this volume, addresses another significant manuscript of the same text by Gaston Phébus. Her study confirms, however, how much late-medieval artists and writers, not to forget scientists, eagerly integrated natural, or rural, space for their critical investigations of epistemology, economic and political aspects, and, above all, philosophical and theological approaches.

²⁷⁰ *The Hunting Book of Gaston Phébus: Manuscrit français 616, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale*. Introduction by Marcel Thomas and François Avril. Commentary by Wilhelm Schlag. Manuscripts in Miniature, 3 (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1998); Dorothea Walz, *Das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II.* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1994); eadem, *Das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II.: De arte venandi cum avibus. Cod. Pal. Lat. 1071 der Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

²⁷¹ Nicola Zotz, "Auf dem Weg zum Quodlibet: Das Falkenlied des 'Königsteiner Liederbuchs,' neben anderen mittelalterlichen Falkenliedern," *"Ieglicher sang sein eigen ticht": Germanistische und musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge zum deutschen Lied im Mittelalter*, ed. Christoph März (†), Lorenz Welker, and eadem. *Elementa Musicae*, 4 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011), 149–61.

²⁷² See the contributions to the present volume by Maria Cecilia Ruiz and Jacqueline Stuhmiller. Cf. also the latter's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Hunt in Romance and the Hunt as Romance," Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2005.

individual birds are depicted in the illustrations confirms that hunting was considered both a form of aristocratic entertainment and a science.²⁷³

The fabulously illustrated manuscript of the *History of Alexander the Great*, produced in the southern Netherlands during the time of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, allows us to pursue this art-historical approach further. The ancient text by Quintus Curtius Rufus was translated by the Portuguese and Burgundian humanist Vasco da Lucena in 1468 as *Les fais d'Alexandre le grant*. The illustrations accompanying the work are of finest quality and represent, in many ways, the highpoint of late Gothic miniature art, so to speak hovering at the threshold to the Renaissance. Vasco da Lucena's translation has survived in thirty-four manuscripts created for members of French-speaking nobles in northern Europe.

As Scot McKendrick observes with respect to the illustrations, "As elsewhere in the best of Northern European art of the fifteenth century, much emphasis is given to the geometry of each composition. Architecture is employed to frame, shape, and distinguish non-contemporary or consecutive scenes, particularly through the device of isolating a larger area on the left-hand side for the principal scene."²⁷⁴ He is certainly right in the larger schema of things, so when he comments, "The depiction of three-dimensional space and the mirroring of nature are secondary to narrative concerns" (36). However, pursuing our particular interest, we can observe, first of all, a great interest in the marginal drawings where countless details from nature and human society embellish the page. In fact, the margins at times seem to be as important as the central image, considering the love for details and the delight in presenting flowers, birds, fruit, animals, and strange creatures.

The parallels, however, to most other manuscript illustrations from that time period, are very strong and not really surprising. Nevertheless, there is a novel depth perception, an intriguing awareness about how to depict space in geometric terms. Events are presented in a simultaneous fashion, and each time we face both interior and exterior space, both architectural elements and nature scenes, all intimately collaborating with each other to give the image the maximum of narrative meaning with regard to the accompanying text. On fol. 41r, for instance, here plate 3, the issue rests on Alexander's illness at the Cydnus River and the death of Sisinnus. There are many events to relate, and the artists made the best possible effort to develop a highly diversified landscape outside of a heavily fortified city around which a river runs smoothly.

On a slight elevation in the background a row of trees is standing, each covered with leaves in different shades of green. In the far background a mountain range

²⁷³ Doroetha Walz, *Das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II.* (see note 270). For Juan Manuel's work and the illustrations, see the contribution to the present volume by Maria Cecilia Ruiz.

²⁷⁴ Scot McKendrick, *The History of Alexander the Great*. Getty Museum Monographs on Illuminated Manuscripts (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996), 35.

becomes visible, painted in light blue to indicate the far distance. The foreground is occupied with a large group of soldiers and Alexander's tent to the left. The artist made greatest efforts to present a variety of landscapes, with a plain area in the foreground, some elevations in the background, small cliffs near the river, and shrubbery and grass growing everywhere. We discover even a bush of reed grass near the river. There is, in other words, no doubt about the artist's incredible skill in organizing the rural space to the greatest advantage for the narrative development.

In the scene showing the competition in Sittacene and the placating of Sisigambis (fol. 99, plate 5), we witness both a simple pasture outside of the city gates, and numerous elevations in the background, on which trees are growing. Even within the urban space we observe trees rising up, as if nature cannot be held back, or resisted, since it looks like an enclosed garden. Of course, cityscapes dominate, and when we are confronted with rural spaces, then the garden setting or the vista into the far distance prove to be the dominant features.

Nevertheless, as we easily recognize, without some hints of rural space the artist/s virtually never completes his pictures. Even when we look at a highly energetic image representing a siege, such as Alexander's conquest of the town of Sudracae (fol. 204, plate 13), where the protagonist is shown having jumped down into the city square without having enough support from his troops, rural elements are never completely missing. A tall tree provides him at least with a back cover, which then allows him to drive away his enemies until his own soldiers have breached the defense walls and have come to his rescue. The artist skillfully divides the scene, allowing us a clear view into the city where Alexander is engaged in a most dangerous fight, and a view of the area outside, dotted with bushes and trees.

Space, whether urban or rural, gains central attention since it becomes the stage for many of the critical events in Alexander's military campaign. It is also worth noting that despite the most violent nature of the miniature, the frame is beautifully and peacefully decorated with many different fruit and flowers, leaves, and acorns, a characteristic feature of this manuscript, and parallel to many other late-medieval manuscripts. Although McKendrick views the presentation of rural space primarily as deceptive and unrealistic because they "fail to mirror reality" (36), we clearly sense the degree to which rural space has gained in respect and importance both for the late-medieval artists and their patrons.

Even wood sculptors, such as Tilman Riemenschneider (ca. 1460–1531) turned their attention to natural details and included trees and bushes in their panels of altar triptychs, such as his Holy Blood Altar in St. Jacob, Rothenburg ob der Tauber

(1499–1505), if we consider the trees, hills, and rocks.²⁷⁵ After all, even the holiest scenes in the New Testament could no longer be presented without some details borrowed from rural space.²⁷⁶

A final, and most splendid example proves to be the extraordinary panels of the by now famous retablo (altar piece) from the Ciudad Rodrigo, created by Fernando Gallego (ca. 1440–after 1507) and Maestro Bartolomé (specific dates unknown, but contemporary to Gallego), obviously under the influence of the Flemish school to the north, replacing the influence of the International Gothic, sometime between 1480 and 1488.²⁷⁷ Very much in the vein of the illustrations to the *History of Alexander the Great* (see above), the interest in rural space is gaining new dimension, as reflected by the countless details that attract the viewer's eyes. In Fernando's painting of "Christ and the Samaritan Woman" (plate 8 in *Fernando Gallego*, 2008), we become witnesses of a most delightful landscape, with hills, bushes, trees, a meandering river, grassy landscape, rocky areas, and a wide open landscape extending into the distance of the background. We also recognize parts of a city in the top right corner, but the artists made greatest efforts to situate the scene as much as possible in a rural setting. Certainly, as is often the case in contemporary art, most of the artistic elements are clearly borrowed from model books, and might not have been copied from nature. Nevertheless, we recognize the innovative approach pursued by Fernando to allow the natural world its own right, especially in this powerful religious scene. Of course, this is not necessarily Fernando's native Spain, as we can read in the new catalogue:

The carefully modeled, irregularly shaped, and light brownish green rocks scattered in the immediate foreground appear in many of the artist's outdoor scenes and are imitated by his followers The puffy green trees accented by flecks of yellow paint on the surface are characteristic of Fernando Gallego's landscapes. Although the muted, earthy, slightly pinkish browns and greens dominate and may reflect the

²⁷⁵ Tilman Riemenschneider: *Master Sculptor of the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Julien Chapuis (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, Washington; New Haven: Distributed by Yale University Press, 1990); *Tilman Riemenschneider, c. 1460-1531*, ed. Julien Chapuis (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, Washington; New Haven: Distributed by Yale University Press, 2004).

²⁷⁶ Rainer Kahsnitz, *Carved Splendor: Late Gothic Altarpieces in Southern Germany, Austria, and South Tirol*, with photos by Achim Bunz, trans. by Russell Stockman (2005; Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006).

²⁷⁷ R. M. Quinn, *Fernando Gallego and the Retablo of Ciudad Rodrigo*. Spanish version by Renato Rosaldo (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1961); now see the contributions to *Fernando Gallego and His Workshop: The Altarpiece from Ciudad Rodrigo. Paintings from the Collection of the University of Arizona Museum of Art*, ed. Amanda W. Dotseth, Barbara C. Anderson, and Mark A. Roglán (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), which highlight the results of most recent in-depth research on those paintings after they had gone through an extensive cleaning process and art-historical analysis.

landscape of the artist's native Castile, the architecture of the city in the distance, whose combination of pink and gray towers with blue roofs is also characteristic of Fernando and recalls the pitched roofs reminiscent of contemporary northern European rather than Castilian architecture.²⁷⁸

Predominantly, however, the focus has shifted here, and urban space, which had attracted many contemporary late-Gothic artists, is increasingly pushed into the background, while rural space assumes central, or at least a significantly greater relevance than before. Of course, this has also much to do with the specific biblical scenes of this altarpiece, and there are also episodes clearly situated in a city, such as "Changing the Water into Wine" during the *Wedding of Kana* (plate 13). And the young Jesus in the Temple (plate 18) has to be situated, of course, within architectural space.

But whenever Gallego had an opportunity, he dedicated all his efforts to the development of rural scenes, delighting in painting hills, pastures, rivers, lakes, trees, bushes, and flowers, rocks, and forests, yet ignored animals altogether. In "The Raising of Lazarus," for instance, the artist assumed an elevated vantage point, allowing us not only to look on the open coffin, from which Lazarus rises, but, more importantly, to look down a hill into a valley traversed by a river. Typical rock formations dot the landscape, as do a variety of stylized trees, while a castle is perched on a hill in the distance. The city in the top left corner almost disappears from our view, while the overall rural space truly dominates this painting.²⁷⁹

Very similar to the landscapes in Hartmann Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle* and other artistic representations of the world,²⁸⁰ the artist varies his scenes, each time combining hills with rivers and creeks, allowing trees and bushes to prop up, giving us everywhere a clear sense of an almost *real* setting. He demonstrates, for instance, a great interest in the sky, experimenting with various shades of blue to reflect the coming of dawn ("The Agony in the Garden"), or later times during the day ("The Entry into Jerusalem").

Most remarkably, in "The Deposition of Christ" we discover a typical element from the genre of *The Books of Hours*, that is, a farmer bringing in his harvest, having his oxen pulling the cart, while white goats graze in the background. Quite obviously, here we are dealing with stylized elements borrowed from model

²⁷⁸ Fernando Gallego and His Workshop (see note 277), 274.

²⁷⁹ Here I reflect on my own analysis in the Museum of Art, The University of Arizona, where all these panels are on display, as part of the Samuel Kress Foundation.

²⁸⁰ Albrecht Classen, "After the Discovery of the New World – the Rediscovery of History: Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum*. A Masterpiece of the Incunabula Time," *Futhark* 5 (2010): 95–109; Hartmann Schedel, *Chronicle of the World: The Complete and Annotated Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493*, trans. by Georg Alt, introd. and appendix by Stephan Füssel (New York and Cologne: Taschen, 2001).

books, and yet we have to admit that the relationship between the religious motifs and the material background, now increasingly rural space, changed by the end of the Middle Ages. There would not be any need to confirm this through extensive studies of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century art.²⁸¹

Nevertheless, let us repeat this conclusion, because it has such tremendous implications for our entire project. If we pay close attention to late-medieval and early-modern art, especially *Books of Hours*, altar pieces, and even wood and stone sculptures, we can find numerous confirmations for this observation, as illustrated by a (fifteenth- or sixteenth-century?) stone sculpture in Bruges, Belgium (Fig. 3), and one in Glastonbury, southwest England (Fig. 4),²⁸² where we observe each time at first sight rather simple, but then truly intriguing scenes of ordinary peasants, commonly milking their cows. After all, neither the city dwellers nor members of the court could afford to ignore the peasant class since these farmers were entirely in control of food production. We cannot pursue, of course, a naive perspective and simply claim that in the early modern age (Renaissance and Baroque, for instance) nature gained in status, and so the peasant class. The same could be argued for the merchant or the courtier, the medical doctor or the engineer.

In specific terms, beginning in the later part of the sixteenth century we observe the emergence of the new genre of *Landschaftsmalerei*, paintings of landscape, often on large canvas,²⁸³ as best represented, if not initiated by, Pieter Brueghel the Elder (ca. 1526/1530–1569), and subsequently by his sons, Pieter Brueghel the Younger

²⁸¹ Claudia Lazzaro. *The Italian Renaissance Garden: From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford History of Art (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). It goes without saying that the art of gardening and of designing parks grew in leaps and bounds throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; see for instance, Thomas Hill, *The Gardeners Labyrinth, or, A New Art of Gardning . . .* (London: Printed by Jane Bell, and are to be sold at the east-end of Christ-Church, [1652 [i.e., 1651]]); Louis Liger, *Le jardinier fleuriste et historiographe: ou la culture universelle des fleurs, arbres, arbustes & arbrisseaux, servans à l'embellissement des jardins* (1706; Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1999); Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*. 5 vols. in 2 vols. With a foreword by Hans Foramitti (1779–1785. Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2011).

²⁸² Edith Margaret Robertson Ditmas, *Glastonbury Tor: Fact and Legend* (St. Peter Port, Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1981); see also the useful and pleasantly detailed article in *Wikipedia* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glastonbury_Tor (last accessed on Oct. 5, 2011).

²⁸³ Peter C. Sutton, Albert Blankert, Josua Bruyn, Alan Chong, and Simon Schama, *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1987); Walter S. Gibson, *Mirror of the Earth: The World Landscape In Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); id., *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruysdael*. An Ahmanso – Murphy Fine Arts Book (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). The scholarly discourse on this topic is huge, but suffice to refer to these few publications for our purposes here.

(1564–1636/1637) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625). Brueghel the Elder did not belong to the peasant class; instead he was obviously well educated and enjoyed close contacts with high ranking individuals in the Church and the government. We would not be too far off the mark if we identified him as a humanist in his own rights. For our purposes his five, originally six landscape pictures, reflecting the six major seasons in a year, attract most of our attention because they constitute the beginning of an autonomous interest in rural scenes in the history of art.²⁸⁴

We can certainly observe connections with the illustrations of the famous *Books of Hours* (see above), and he also learned much from Joachim Patinir, also called de Patiner (ca. 1480–1524),²⁸⁵ who created monumental rural vistas deeply filled with Christian symbolism in the style of late Gothic art, but Brueghel took a new step in the dramatic, realistic, and large-scale presentation of specific episodes in the countryside at different stages in the course of a year.²⁸⁶ All his paintings, here disregarding the large number of sketches and small-size pictures from 1552 to 1556, are characterized by an epic, encyclopedic, often also satirical approach, and a maximum of empirical depiction of objects, people, animals, plants, mountains, and bodies of water.²⁸⁷

Whether we can discover here a pantheistic world view, as older research based on the theses by Karl Tolnai (1925) had argued,²⁸⁸ or whether Brueghel pursued a stoic, aestheticizing perspective, as Müller Hofstede suggests, does not have to be decided in our context, and depends at any rate on much circumstantial evidence. We can be sure, however, that Brueghel's masterpieces signal the beginning of a new attitude about rural space, which, in a truly startling and striking manner, emerges as a world that appears to be familiar and also aesthetically pleasing for the viewer, not determined by apocalyptic visions, by primarily religious

²⁸⁴ Inge Herold, *Pieter Bruegel der Ältere: Die Jahreszeiten* (Munich, London, and New York: Prestel, 2002), 94–95.

²⁸⁵ Reindert Falkenburg, *Joachim Patinir: Landscape as an Image of the Pilgrimage of Life*. Oculi, 2 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988); *Patinir: Essays and Critical Catalogue*, ed. Alexander Vergara (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007).

²⁸⁶ Herold, *Pieter Bruegel der Ältere* (see note 284), 7–15, et passim; *Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, comp. Nadine M. Orenstein, ed. Manfred Sellink. New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450–1700, 16 (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Publisher, 2006); Leopoldine Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)* (Farnham, Surrey, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

²⁸⁷ Justus Müller Hofstede, "Zur Interpretation von Pieter Bruegels Landschaft: Ästhetischer Landschaftsbegriff und Stoische Weltbetrachtung," *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, ed. Otto von Simson and Matthias Winner (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1979), 73–142; here 77.

²⁸⁸ (Charles de) Karl Tolnai, *Die Zeichnungen Pieter Bruegels* (Munich: R. Piper, 1925); see also his monograph *Die Zeichnungen Pieter Bruegels: mit einem kritischen Katalog und 188 Abbildungen*, 2nd ed. (1952; Zürich: Rascher, 1952).

intentions (as in the case of Partinir), or patterned by traditional models (as was still often the case with the miniatures in the *Books of Hours*).

The famous painting “*Hunters in the Snow*,” for instance, confirms this impression most poignantly, with the viewer’s gaze gliding from an elevated platform where the hunters are shown returning from the forest down to several frozen ponds in the valley where people go ice skating. The wheel of the mill is totally frozen over with ice, and all roofs are covered with snow. The village itself is nestled in the center of the valley, and fields and then craggy mountains form the background. The sky is grey, as it often would be in winter time in northern Europe. The amount of details is incredible, since Brueghel painstakingly paid attention to every element of his large landscape. In fact, the photographic quality of this painting could not be greater, presenting a large section of rural space as the artist had probably observed *in situ*. There is no doubt about the really cold temperature, but this appears simply as a fact of life and not as an existential threat. People still pursue their ordinary activities, working, enjoying their leisure time, and making fire. In other words, both allegory and emotive strategies are absent in this paintings of the winter season, since Brueghel apparently intended to give us an impression of that unremarkable scene as completely as possible without evaluating, symbolizing, or allegorizing the setting.

While many other artists of genre paintings, such as Pieter van der Borch (1545–1608), David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690), Adriaen van Ostade (1610–1685), and Adriaen Brouwer (ca. 1605–1638) portrayed peasants exclusively in satirical, negative terms, Brueghel the Elder pursued mostly the opposite strategy of presenting rural life in neutral terms, presenting farmers as hard-working individuals who also knew how to enjoy life. Considering that Brueghel was familiar with Virgil’s *Georgica* and Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, where the existence in the countryside is described in idyllic terms, and keeping in mind that the economic and military situation in the Low Countries experienced a dramatic decline just at the time when Brueghel created his famous pieces, we may conclude that he certainly intended to project in them the dream of a peaceful, harmonious world from the past.

Not surprisingly, these motifs found a great reception, so his works were copied many times by his son Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Jacob Grimmer (1525–1590), and the latter’s son, Abel Grimmer (1575–1619), among many others.²⁸⁹ In a way

²⁸⁹ Herold, *Pieter Bruegel* (see note 284), 57–63. For a good collection of images online, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder; and <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/bruegel/>. See also the YouTube video of Brueghel’s painting “*The Harvesters*” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York at http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/brue/hd_brue.htm (all last accessed on Dec. 10, 2011).

we might say that Brueghel was really the founder of the early modern landscape motif and scene in the history of Western art.²⁹⁰

Despite the highly detailed focus on specific agricultural scenes or aspects in the lives of peasants, the parallels to global cartography, as richly developed by Brueghel's friend, the map engraver Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) are critical for our understanding of his landscapes. Wherever we look, we only find harmonious, meaningful, self-contained and satisfactory conditions where people work and live, pursue their business, and enjoy the outdoors. This is a stoic, rational, and intelligible world, while Brueghel then also painted the very opposite, scenes filled with fools, blind people, and irrational conditions.

It would not be too far-fetched to agree with Müller Hofstede that one of the mottos which Ortelius used in his famous *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* from 1570 and borrowed from Cicero (*Tusculanae disputationes*, lib. IV, cap. 17, §37), might have influenced Brueghel as well: “Quid ei potest videri magnum in rebus humanis, cui aeternitas omnis, totiusque mundi nota sit magnitudo” (What would [really] appear to be big in human affairs for the one who knows all of eternity and the entire world).²⁹¹

As much as the painter presented truly impressive and realistic landscapes, these would have to be considered only as small reflections of the much larger world where God resides. This religious epistemology might not come through directly in the paintings, but the Ciceronian philosophy required the full comprehension of this world, the microcosm, for the comprehension of the macrocosm. Perhaps particularly because of the dramatic political, economic, and military changes, crises, and natural catastrophes that shook the Low Countries heavily during Brueghel's life time, the artist made a strong effort to present nature as a harmonious refuge by way of these “Überschaulandschaften” (overview landscapes).²⁹² Quoting Müller Hofstede, we can conclude:

In den Monatsbildern ist die sich wandelnde Landschaft der große Naturzusammenhang, in dem sich eine rationale Welt entfalten kann; Ernte,

²⁹⁰ Slive Seymour and Jakob Rosenberg, *Dutch painting 1600–1800*. Yale University Press Pelican History of Art (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford History of Art (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁹¹ Müller Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation” (see note 287), 131. See now also Bertram Kaschek, *Weltzeit und Endzeit: Studien zu den Monatsbildern Pieter Bruegels d. Ä.* (Paderborn: Fink, Wilhelm, 2011).

²⁹² Herold, *Pieter Bruegel der Ältere* (see note 284), 30–31. For a careful analysis of all pictorial elements, see Fritz Novotny, *Die Monatsbilder Pieter Bruegels d. Ä.* Kunstdenkmäler, 4 (Vienna: F. Deuticke, 1948). For a comprehensive collection of his paintings, see F. Grossmann, *Bruegel: The Paintings. Complete Edition*, sec. ed. (1955; London: Phaidon Press, 1966); Roger H. Marijnissen, *Bruegel: das vollständige Werk* (Cologne: Parkland Verlag, 2003); see also Robert L. Bonn, *Painting Life: The Art of Pieter Bruegel, the Elder* (New York: Chaucer Press Books, 2006); Larry Silver, *Pieter Bruegel* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2011).

Mittagsrast, Heimtrieb des Viehs, Rückkehr ins Dorf mit karger Jagdbeute oder das Beschneiden der Bäume nehmen ihren selbstverständlichen Lauf.²⁹³

[The ever changing landscape in the pictures of the months is the large framework of nature in which a rational world can unfold; harvest, lunch rest, driving animals home, return to the village with a meager prey from the hunt, or the pruning of trees are all elements that pursue their natural course.]

If we consider, for instance, his painting of "The Harvest," we observe a calm and well-arranged world. People do their job as required, without protest or complaint, and they also enjoy their rest, eating, drinking, sleeping, and talking with each other. The field of grain is ready to be harvested, and there are no concerns about low yield, threatening weather, or the like. As we can tell from the movement of individuals walking through the field, working in the background, binding the grain sheaves together, or cutting the grain with the scythe, there is no rush, no worry, no stress. Instead, we become witnesses of a harmonious group of villagers happily, agreeably performing their necessary task, and nature rewards them for their efforts, as the rich field of grain indicates. Moreover, a church spire rises in the background, providing relief regarding the religious support system well in place. In the distance the view opens up toward a beautifully balanced landscape, with hills, meadows, groves, pastures, then also a harbor where some tall ships are anchored. All the farmers appear well-fed, relaxed, and content with their lives, and hence we might call this painting almost idyllic, signaling how much for Brueghel rural space served as a safe haven for all human existence (Fig. 5).²⁹⁴

Whether Brueghel the Elder was influenced by the *Books of Hours* so popular in the late Middle Ages, or whether he was inspired by countless wood carvings underneath the *misericords* in the choir stalls of churches and cathedrals, will also remain indeterminable, though connections are very clear to observe. The number of different scenes on these *misericords* is large, and they are surprisingly often dominated by rural scenes in order to illustrate, so it seems, common proverbs as teaching tools for everyman. Many of the motifs directly allude to the Seven Deadly Sins, but then they also reflect the various seasons throughout the year, and feasts of fools, which underscores, once more, how much the rural framework was commonly utilized for moral, ethical, and religious teachings. It would be intriguing to learn to what extent Brueghel and other contemporary painters exchanged ideas with the wood carvers and sculptors. But in the absence of any such evidence we can only argue that all those artists were keenly aware of the

²⁹³ Müller Hofstede, "Zur Interpretation" (see note 287), 141.

²⁹⁴ Nils Jockel, *Mit Pieter Bruegel durch das Jahr: Frühling, Sommer, Herbst und Winter. Abenteuer Kunst* (Munich, London, and New York: Prestel, 2002).

considerable usefulness of rural scenes as powerful mirrors for all people to perceive themselves in their own shortcomings and frailties.²⁹⁵

At large, then, the symbolism, the metaphorical use, the allegorical intentions, the satirical and ironic strategies hidden behind the scenes and images, or the philosophical and ethical operations carried out to convey specific universal teachings by way of incorporating heretofore ignored or neglected rural space cannot be overlooked. I will refrain, however, from discussing an endless stream of further evidence regarding this issue, which could impermissibly water down the entire notion of 'rural space' and of 'nature,' both of which have been employed for a wide range of quite unrelated concepts within the epistemological and theological discourse, and instead now turn to the individual contributions to this volume. But I would not want to conclude this section without referring to the fascinating and highly noteworthy corpus of travelogues, especially by pilgrims, who tended to include numerous comments on the exotic animals and plants which they encountered on their voyages and travels. Konrad Grünemberg, for instance, dropped numerous remarks on camels, elephants, dromedaries, monkeys, and giraffes in his report about his pilgrimage in 1486, since they all struck him as exotic and exciting at the same time. As much as he was concerned with giving a detailed account of his pilgrimage itself, emphasizing churches, chapels, monasteries, and relics everywhere, he could not, similarly as many of his contemporary travelers, blind himself to the natural environment that he encountered in the Arabic world, for instance. At the same time Grünemberg, like Felix Fabri, Arnold von Harff, or Bernhard von Breidenbach demonstrated great interest in anthropological, architectural, and agricultural aspects, which confirms the great importance of such pilgrimage reports for many different perspectives. To be sure, considering our context in mind, the religious and the biological interest are curiously and revealingly held in a significant balance here.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Elaine C. Block, "Misericords and the World of Bruegel," *Profane Images in Marginal Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. eadem with the assistance of Frédéric Billiet, Sylvie Bethmont-Gallerand, and Paul Hardwick. *Profane Arts of the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 21–45.

²⁹⁶ Andrea Denke, *Konrad Grünembergs Pilgerreise ins Heilige Land 1486: Untersuchung, Edition und Kommentar*. *Stuttgarter Historische Forschungen*, 11 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 216–21; in the edition, 354, 383, et passim. As much as the entire history of medieval pilgrimage has been the object of intense research, much still needs to be done to gain a full comprehension of what information is contained in those many pilgrimage accounts. Especially the dimension of rural space, including animals, farming, forests, mountains, shores, and rivers, has not attracted any noteworthy interest. See, for instance, the excellent, in this regard, however, insufficient *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. Larissa J. Taylor, Leigh Ann Craig, et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010).

31. Acknowledgment and Summaries of all Contributions in this Volume

In order to facilitate the critical approach to this volume, and following the tradition of this book series, I will subsequently offer detailed summaries and commentaries on the individual contributions, occasionally adding further research and raising complementary questions to contextualize the many different studies on rural space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Most of these papers were first presented in short form and orally at the 9th International Symposium at the University of Arizona (Tucson): Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, May 5–8, 2011. We continued with our scholarly exchanges during a one-day conference at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, on July 16, 2011. I am very grateful to all contributors for their great research, for their impressive effort to submit their pieces on time, and their patience with the intensive editing process. I am also very thankful for some financial support that I received from the Department of German Studies, and the Dean of the College of Humanities, The University of Arizona. My great gratitude also extends to the editorial staff at De Gruyter in Berlin for their help to steer this book through the final stages readying the manuscript for publication. Last but by far not the least, my dear colleague Christopher R. Clason was a wonderful collaborator in this project. My co-editor of this series, "Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture," Marilyn Sandidge, provided important support in various ways, for which I am also very grateful. She also read the entire Introduction and made excellent suggestions. Moreover, I am grateful to Jean E. Jost and other contributors for their helpful feedback.

While medievalists and Renaissance researchers have focused mostly on the development of urban space, i.e., the rise of the city as one of the most important cultural sites in the premodern world, it is no longer possible, as this volume wants to demonstrate, to treat rural space as marginal and negligible. Most remarkably, as Kathryn L. Jasper uncovers in her contribution, during the eleventh century major monastic developments established themselves in the rural space of Italy, especially the Camaldolesi and the Vallombrosan orders. The same could be argued also for the Cistercians, first in northeastern France, but then spreading all over medieval Europe.²⁹⁷ The European monastic systems were far removed from the Egyptian hermits and early Church Fathers in their turn away from

²⁹⁷ David H. Williams, *The Cistercians in the Early Middle Ages: Written to Commemorate the Nine Hundredth Anniversary of Foundation of the Order at Cîteaux in 1098* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998); Immo Eberl, *Die Zisterzienser: Geschichte eines europäischen Ordens* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2007).

civilization toward the rural isolation. Nevertheless, they equally embraced loneliness and rusticity as religious ideals with many potentials for their new and individualized spiritual development.

Jasper focuses, above all, on the highly productive work of Peter Damian, who, despite enjoying a brilliant career in the Church, never ignored his own foundations in the Marches in northeastern Italy, especially the monastery of Saint John the Baptist at Acereta and hermitage of Saint Barnabas at Gamogna. There it was possible, as he emphasized in his writing, to transition from monk to hermit, a most important transformation in the individual's quest for God's grace here on earth—and this in direct contradiction to the protests by abbots who insisted on the global validity of St. Benedict's Rules. Damian, however, argued that these Rules never had been intended for people who desired for a life in an hermitage. Although hermits were usually living by themselves, in the case of Damian's foundations, but also elsewhere and even much earlier, numerous hermits joined in a community, sometimes even surrounded by a wall. Each head of such a community was independent from any higher authority. But both monastery and hermitage were founded in the wilderness, and established new religious settlements far away from urban centers.

To make it possible for the hermits to achieve their spiritual goal, Damian encouraged the monastery to provide the necessary help, whereby he established a sort of hierarchy even within the ecclesiastical domain. The hermitage was responsible for the sanctity of the monastery, and the latter was responsible for the economic and administrative support for the former.

The monks and hermits were required, following Damian's rules and principles, to turn to manual labor, through which they steadily transformed the empty rural space into flourishing agricultural entities. Again, this was very similar to the efforts and strategies by the Cistercians, but Jasper examines particularly the Italian world and illustrates how eremitic life could powerfully transform wilderness into most important locations for monastic and eremitic activities. After all, the communities were not that far away from major roads, since the monks, for instance, were regularly in need of transporting goods, of visiting neighboring monasteries, or of carrying out business in a nearby city. The hermits, on the other hand, turned away from human society in a much more radical way, seeking out isolation and silence in order to practice more effectively meditation, prayer, and living a sanctifying life (devotion), but they could afford that move because of the support provided by the monastery. Moreover, due to the heightened need for help in that isolated location/s, Damian urged the hermits to practice fraternal cooperation both during their lifetime and especially after their death, praying for the soul of the deceased, for instance.

Jasper concludes by emphasizing that the concept of rural space proves to be particularly valuable with respect to the development of eleventh-century

Christian spirituality, which required these natural loci of isolation. In fact, the examples drawn from eleventh-century Italy allow us to grasp in greater detail the particular motivations and strategies pursued by twelfth-century Cistercians. This confirms, once again, how much the traditional focus primarily on urban or courtly culture during the Middle Ages could threaten to blind us to many other facets, such as monastic and eremitic life in northeastern Italy and elsewhere.²⁹⁸

Space in the city was different from space at court, and so also from space in the village, not to mention wild nature, the mountains, or the shore. Sherri Olson probes in her contribution how women could carve out a niche in the public space of the medieval village, which proves to be a nice complementation in the discussion of female roles and functions in urban space by Shennan Hutton in her contribution to the previous volume on *Urban Space*.²⁹⁹ Olson bases her analysis on the findings from archeological excavations at Ellington (modern Cambridgeshire) and the most invaluable estate rolls which shed much light on the social conditions at that location. Especially court rolls for villages have survived in the hundreds, beginning to record court proceedings since the thirteenth century. Olson suggests that the data contained in those documents allow us to grasp in surprisingly great detail how women could operate in their rural space, what movements they could make, and how much power they could hold within the framework of a village.

Compared to the early Middle Ages, village life became more crowded by the high and late Middle Ages, with the rural population having grown considerably and being forced to live in the same, by then densely packed spaces. This had tremendous influence on women's movement in that restricted space, as Olson can reap from her careful analysis of the rolls. Comparative approaches can help in this regard profoundly because similar conditions probably exist in African village structures today and existed in antebellum American rural society since we can consistently assume that an intensive kinship network existed and determined all social relationships. Although in medieval villages (both in England and on the continent) the famous circumambulation involved mostly men and boys,³⁰⁰ it would be erroneous to assume that women were simply housebound. Social activities, including birthdays, weddings, and other holiday events were of great

²⁹⁸ Alberico Pagnani, *Storia dei benedettini camaldolesi. Cenobiti, eremiti, monache ed oblati* (Sassoferrato: Garofoli, 1949); Paolo Bossi and Alessandro Ceratti, *Eremiti camaldolesi in Italia: luoghi, architettura, spiritualità* (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1993).

²⁹⁹ Shennan Hutton, "Women, Men, and Markets: The Gendering of Market Space in Late Medieval Ghent," *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 409–31. See also the contribution to the present volume by Martha Moffitt Peacock.

³⁰⁰ Charles Cooper, *A Village in Sussex: The History of Kingston-Near-Lewes* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2006).

significance—and continue to be for modern-day villagers—and allowed women free range, even though the documents do not necessarily reflect those social, personal activities, especially not for women.³⁰¹

But the village center was, after all, next to the home, still the most important space where women could operate in medieval villages. It would be erroneous, however, to assume that medieval peasant women had a limited, well-defined work regimen. Probably very similar to conditions even today, they operated in a very fluid environment and collaborated with their husbands in a most flexible way as demand required from them. If we turned to the illustrations in the *Books of Hours*, we would be able to confirm at least to some extent that specific observation, since we recognize in those illustrations a panoply of rural scenes where men and women freely share in the activities demanded from farm work. Moreover, the critical social component proved to be the neighborhood, small social units where gender identities mattered less than pragmatic needs, purposes, and functions.

In fact, as Olson comments, the rolls reveal the true extent to which women were very actively involved in public life, whether defending their own legal status, fighting back rapists, insisting on their individual status within the social community, or raising complaints about economic injustice or disadvantage. Whatever the reason or cause might have been, the rolls register an increasing number of women involved in legal complaints or suits, which suggests that the gender relationships in late-medieval England experienced a steady change in favor of women.³⁰² They increasingly got involved in small businesses, including brewing and money-lending, as documented by the famous, or rather notorious mystic Margery Kempe (ca. 1375–ca. 1440), although she was the daughter of the mayor of Lynne, a rather significant Hanseatic city on the coast of the North Sea. As Olson observes, women over time gained more and more legal prominence and assumed the role of spokespersons for their families, as reflected in the roll books.

Even if women had a hard time, as Olson concludes, to make their voices heard in the village rolls, they were certainly present in multiple fashions and assumed, virtually by default, a significant function because they were influential, if not central agents in their social communities. They made their voices heard, raising hue and cry whenever important, and they struggled hard and often quite

³⁰¹ A good literary example would be the German allegorical romance, Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring* from ca. 1400; see my discussion above.

³⁰² See also the contributions to *Medieval Women in Their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997). However, not even here the village woman surfaces as prominently as in Olson's study. For representative studies focusing on medieval France, see the articles in *Urban and Rural Communities in Medieval France: Provence and Languedoc, 1000–1500*, ed. Kathryn Reyerson and John Victor Drendel. The Medieval Mediterranean, 18 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998).

successfully in maintaining their position within the village context of farm life. Olson's close reading of the rolls and other documents indicates that rural space was certainly a terrain where medieval women could claim considerable independence and influence, even though they then did not necessarily appear all that frequently in the sources.³⁰³

Scholars have tended to identify specific boundaries between the Middle Ages and the early modern age as determined by the characteristic and almost all-pervasive reception of classical literature and the arts, but also by the introduction of the central perspective in the visual arts.³⁰⁴ However, medieval literature contains, from early on, countless examples of the great interest in the natural environment, which invites us to discuss much more carefully than before the perception of rural space and nature, which enjoyed, under certain circumstances, some popularity already at those times, although the Renaissance, where that phenomenon became more noticeable, was still far away.³⁰⁵

Ecocritical approaches to medieval poetry are just about to investigate what we can learn from those texts that have traditionally identified courtly culture and were determined by that very culture. Christopher R. Clason offers a reading of Walther von der Vogelweide's early thirteenth-century poetry in light of his reflections on rural space, and this even within the context of courtly love poetry. As much as Walther is regarded by most medieval German philologists as one of the finest poets of his time, we have not yet attempted to read his work in light of ecocriticism. Even within the most tropological context, Walther engages with natural elements that he is obviously personally familiar with. As much as we would have to agree with Curtius's reading at large concerning the adaptation of

³⁰³ See the contributions to *Königin, Klosterfrau, Bäuerin: Frauen im Frühmittelalter. Bericht zur dritten Tagung des Netzwerks archäologisch arbeitender Frauen*, 19. – 22. Oktober 1995 in Kiel, ed. Helga Brandt and Julia K. Koch. *Agenda Frauen: Frauen – Forschung – Archäologie*, 8, 2 (Münster: Agenda-Verlag, 1996). For a helpful collection of relevant primary documents from across Europe, see *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*, ed. Emilie Amt (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 179–93. These documents address social, ethical, economical, and religious aspect relevant in the lives of rural women.

³⁰⁴ There are countless studies that could be cited here; see, for instance, William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden, *The Idea of the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Karlheinz Stierle, "Spectaculum: Der Blick auf die Welt bei Petrarca und Jan van Eyck," *Der stumme Diskurs der Bilder: Reflexionsformen des Ästhetischen in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Valeska von Rosen, Klaus Krüger, and Rudolf Preimesberger (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2003), 119–38; see also the contributions to *Landschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. Karl-Heinz Spieß (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007); Manuel Schramm, "Die Entstehung der modernen Landschaftswahrnehmung (1580–1730)," *Historische Zeitschrift* 287 (2008): 37–59.

³⁰⁵ Helmut Brall-Tuchel, "Frömmigkeit und Herrschaft, Wonne und Weg: Landschaften in der Literatur des Mittelalters," *'Landschaft im Mittelalter? – Augenschein und Literatur*, ed. Jens Pfeffer. *Das Mittelalter: Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung* 16.1 (2011): 104–30.

classical tropes and topoi in medieval literature, as much we also must agree that poets throughout times had to play and experiment with stylistic elements that they had borrowed from a variety of sources, without abandoning altogether a realistic strain to their presentations.

Even if Walther's poems prove to be mostly formulaic, drawing from the tradition of courtly and classical poetry, Clason still believes that we can recognize in his songs strong reflections of human life as mirrored in natural environment. As pastoral and bucolic many of his love and gnomic songs prove to be, a good number of them is still predicated on a strong sense of the beauty and significance of nature. Walther's poetic quality rests not only in his sensitivity regarding authentic amorous feelings, or regarding political and social injustice. He also made serious attempts in a good handful of his songs to allow the essential features of nature to enter the stage of his literary discourse. Only in nature true love can develop, as his female voice in "Under der linden" confirms, where a utopian society of lovers is invited to share the joy which he had with her male friend. In fact, the poet implies a certain degree of criticism of the lack of naturalness at court, which prevents the emergence of a true and joyful love affair. Walther searches, by contrast, for the harmony between human society and nature, but this requires the lovers to meet in a distance, in a lonely location, where all parts of nature chime in to support the orgiastic experience of love.

As much as the poet constantly evokes traditional genres, especially the *pastourelle*, he undermines the literary framework and tries to bring his fictional figures, or his own poetic 'I' closer to the natural environment, as Clason observes with regard to several other love songs. But even in some of Walther's political, didactic songs we can discover important references to nature where things are considerably better organized than in human society. The poet uses nature as an important foil to profile common failures and shortcomings among people. Walther undoubtedly idealizes the natural world and recognizes in it God's own creation. Presenting himself as a witness of the entire natural world, the poet draws considerable authority from this strategy and also pays great respect to the natural environment.

The inclusion of references to winter and its bitter temperatures, such as in "Diu werlt was gelf, rôet unde blâ," making the poet and others suffer badly, underscores how much Walther was interested in operating with a multitude of natural sceneries, utilizing them for a wide variety of political and ethical concerns and ideals. Resorting to the winter image destroys all joys which the poet had projected in his pastoral songs, which a near contemporary, Neidhart (active until ca. 1240) developed even further, but then with a strong emphasis on peasant satire. As Clason comments, however, Walther deliberately examines the impact of the winter weather on all living creatures in order to concretize his poetry and to create as much authenticity as possible. This finds its most dramatic and vivid

expression in his 'elegy,' "Owê, war sint verschwunden alliu mîniu jâr," where the loss of youth is powerfully equated with the loss of virginal forests and verdant pastures. As Clason's ecocritical approach reveals, Walther skillfully interwove the personal suffering with nature's suffering, and vice versa. The biblical undertones are clearly noticeable, and yet even the most allegorical or symbolic image is rooted in a natural setting, which proves to be one of the hallmarks of Walther's remarkable poetry, hailed for centuries, and now revealing even a strong ecocritical perspective.³⁰⁶

As little as the peasant figure entered the stage of courtly literature, so it seems, as little have we paid close enough attention to those situations where the rural world actually assumes more weight even within courtly romances and lyric poetry. As I have outlined already as closely as possible in the Introduction above, medieval artists and writers were not simply blind to the lower social class. In fact, we could even go one step further down and ask ourselves what we know about poor people and the homeless in the Middle Ages and the early modern age. As Michel Mollat's research has amply demonstrated, simply utilizing a different telescope makes it certainly possible to understand much more about the ordinary life of the miserable and downtrodden than we have heretofore assumed.³⁰⁷ But even those epithets do not necessarily address the social reality in the countryside appropriately, since every village consisted of many layers of different economic classes.³⁰⁸ Feudalism did not simply create hard and insurmountable barriers among the social classes, and the awareness and enjoyment of the rural world was certainly not an invention of modernity.³⁰⁹ It would be probably correct to assume that tensions grew over time between the nobility and the peasant class, as reflected by the various revolts in England (1381) and Germany (1524–1525), for instance, but by that time we also observe many individuals living in rural

³⁰⁶ Brall-Tucher, "Frömmigkeit und Herrschaft" (see note 305), 121–22, reaches similar conclusions, though his emphasis rests on Walther's gnomic, or political songs.

³⁰⁷ Michel Mollat, *Les pauvres au Moyen Age: Etude sociale* (Paris: Hachette, 1978). See now also James William Brodman, *Charity and Welfare: Hospitals and the Poor in Medieval Catalonia*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); cf. *The Voice of the Poor in the Middle Ages: An Anthology of Documents from the Cairo Geniza*, ed. Mark R. Cohen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁰⁸ See the contributions to *Autour du "village"* (see note 218). For early-modern conditions, see *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007). For a recent, local oriented study, see Govind P. Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487–1726: A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe*. Past and Present Publications (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁰⁹ Sebastian Neumeister, "Annäherung an die Natur: Bilder der Landschaft bei Boccaccio," *'Landschaft im Mittelalter? – Augenschein und Literatur*, ed. Jens Pfeffer. *Das Mittelalter: Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung* 16.1 (2011): 131–48.

communities who had gained considerable influence and wealth.³¹⁰ Let us not even mention the mostly erroneous assumptions about those peasants which have transpired into modern myth-making, mostly promoted by Marxist historians who tended to ignore the motifs of the rioters and misunderstood the social background of most participants, who in majority seem to have originated from urban centers.³¹¹

Contrary to all expectations we encounter several cases of a peasant woman falling in love with and marrying a nobleman in medieval literature. In my first contribution to this volume I examine the case of Hartmann von Aue's "Der arme Heinrich" (ca. 1200) and then the anonymous verse narrative "Dis ist von dem Heselin" (late thirteenth century). In both cases the young peasant woman ultimately proves to be the most virtuous person in the male protagonist's presence, and their naive, simple, pure, and chaste behavior strongly appeals to their future husbands. While the audience would certainly have expected that the marriage would have brought two representatives of the aristocratic class together, reconfirming the traditional social and economic structure, here we face a very different situation. In Hartmann's case the man's healing process, which rescues him from certain death resulting from his leprosy, sets only in when he has finally found a young woman willing to die for him.

There are subtle cues as to a budding love relationship, but both Heinrich's sickness and their vast social differences blind us for a long time to the emotional bonds which have already developed between both figures. Heinrich, however, recognizes her true value, beauty, and innocence only once he has peeked through a hole in the wall and has discovered and then understood her extraordinary physical appeal. This means for him that he can no longer accept her sacrifice. What he has witnessed proves to be more than just an attractive young female body, lying naked on the operation table. We are not dealing with an eroticized scene, despite the appearance of the entire setting, determined by the man who cannot control himself and must learn what is happening behind the surgeon's walls. Heinrich is gazing, for sure, but not for sexual reasons. And he does not stop the operation because his lustfulness overpowers him.

Instead, the protagonist experiences an epiphany and realizes that true beauty, both physical and spiritual, rests inside, while the external body, whether attractive or not, stays outside and is not worth fighting for, especially not in such

³¹⁰ George Caspar Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), esp. 328–38, focusing on self-government and public representation of the village before the court. See also H. E. Hallam, *Rural England 1066–1348*. Fontana History of England (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981).

³¹¹ Paul Strohm, "A 'Peasants' Revolt'?", *Misconceptions About the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 197–203; see also Dinah Hazell, "The Medieval Peasant," *ibid.*, 213–17.

a desperate situation.³¹² Subsequently, Heinrich marries the peasant girl, after he has made her parents and her to free farmers, which elevates them, at least theoretically, to the same social levels as his own. In my study I argue that Hartmann here projects a literary utopia that combines the spiritual dimension with highly unusual social-economic aspects, signaling that for him the traditional feudal structure did not guarantee the individual's spiritual existence.

In the later verse narrative a similar process takes place, but there the male protagonist does not have to struggle with virtually certain death as a result of him suffering from leprosy. Instead he seduces a young peasant woman twice, without her understanding fully the meaning and consequences of their sexual tryst. But when he later invites her to his wedding and breaks out in loud laughter when he spies her, carrying the highly symbolic bunny rabbit, he quickly learns that his noble fiancée has no moral consciousness and would later certainly make their married life to sheer horror and misery for him. Quickly correcting his own previous transgressions, and also reaching out to the still chaste young woman, he bridges the deep gulf between nobility and peasantry and accepts her as his wife, the only truly worthy person for that proposition.

Once again, we come across an impressive literary example that sheds powerful light on the tensions between the interior and the exterior dimension of human life and argues in strongest terms that arranged marriages tend to be predicated on purely materialistic and political criteria and do not take into consideration true emotions, or love. Moreover, the protagonist's reaching out to the peasant world serves as a masterful strategy to illuminate the perennial dichotomy between body and mind, or the material existence and the spirit. The anonymous poet of this tale also projected a literary utopia which becomes reality only once the social class differences are pushed aside as irrelevant in ethical and moral considerations.

I conclude the discussion with a brief examination of some of the marital songs by the Tyrolean poet Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) in which erotic bliss and individual or rather group happiness is projected as possible in the rural setting. The emergence of the topical 'brown girl' in late-medieval and early-modern popular songs confirms the relevance of the utopian dream developed by a variety of poets who endeavored to overcome, at least in their fantasy, the social class barriers and so dreamt of happy and untroubled erotic and marital unions of a noble man and a peasant woman.

³¹² Joachim Bumke, *Die Blutstropfen im Schnee: Über Wahrnehmung und Erkenntnis im "Parzival" Wolframs von Eschenbach*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 94 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), has uncovered very similar narrative strategies in contemporary texts and supported his claims with numerous references to the relevant theological and philosophical literature.

How we can fully understand the meaning of rural space in the premodern world might of course always escape our analytic grasp, but indirectly literary genres such as the Old French *fabliaux* offer many intriguing windows allowing us to examine the social realities outside of the city walls, the courts, and the churches. The comic lens, which characterizes all *fabliaux* and parallel genres in the European context (*mæren, novelli, tales, facetiae*), quite naturally fractures our perspectives and forces us to read these hilarious, often almost pornographic verse narratives as complex fictional mirrors of factual conditions predominantly involving the rural population, including the parish priests, but sometimes also merchants, and others. In her contribution to this volume, Sarah Gordon offers an in-depth analysis of rural space as it appears in the *fabliaux*. Neither the urban population in the Middle Ages nor the rural population were on equal footing among each other, just as is the case today. The *fabliaux* authors commonly rely on this important socio-economic factor while developing their facetious, satirical, or sarcastic motifs and themes resorting to significant differences in wealth, rank, and public esteem within the village community.

When the authors voice social criticism, then it is directed at the injustice and inequality even among the peasant population, and at the failure of the leading families to support the poor and needy. Gordon also considers the example of the *Roman de Renart*, where the animals—typical of the fable tradition—stand in for humans and reflect on their foolishness, smartness, or other character features. Both here and in the *fabliaux* we are confronted by rural scenes where some individuals suffer from hunger or simply greed, but where others command vast supplies and economic resources, depending on their personal standing. In fact, it would not be too far off the beam to talk about a ‘bucolic pasture’ within the framework of these rural-oriented humorous narratives.

However, as Gordon alerts us, the ‘bucolic’ element does not blind us to the rustic atmosphere, since the narratives are consistently located in the village and on the farm, where people are surrounded by their animals, where tensions easily flare up over property, resources, and simply food. The poor are never far away, and the wealthy make every effort to control their own goods against the outsiders.

Interestingly, however, a number of *fabliaux* and fable narratives also indicate that the peasants are not simply limited to their rural space, and instead also commute to the urban markets, while members of the city dwellers regularly pay visits to the countryside to purchase food, feed, cloth, and other items, or tend to their own fields, land, or estates.³¹³ At the same time, as many narratives indicate, the problem of theft, robbery, and even murder was significant and constituted a

³¹³ This is particularly well illustrated by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, especially “The Miller’s Tale,” see my comments above.

serious challenge for the rural population, especially when the village priest, for instance, was personally involved, either abusing his clerical power to extract monetary value from his parishioners, or trying to commit adultery with one of the peasant wives. Apart from the examples discussed by Gordon, we could also consider the intriguing *mære* "Der fünfmal getötete Pfarrer" by a poet who assumed the name of the famous fifteenth-century Nuremberg craftsman Hans Rosenplüt. There the village priest is accidentally killed by a shoemaker, and then, because he tries to cover up for his deed, by four other peasants. Everyone demonstrate some respect for the priest, but they all feel deeply upset about his alleged attempt to steal something from them.³¹⁴

Undoubtedly, we have to be very careful in reading too much into this rich corpus of facetious, ribald, and provocative verse narratives, but behind every joke there is some social reality, and Gordon's discussion brings to light a host of relevant themes, concerns, and issues relevant for and of the premodern rural society.³¹⁵

Curiously, recent scholarship wants to identify local references and allusions to (rural) space in medieval narratives as nothing but functions of the moving subject who traverses locations, leaving them behind as completely irrelevant for the subsequent actions and events. For Uta Störmer-Caysa this means that spatial continuity arises only temporarily, in the moment of the narrative movement.³¹⁶ She goes so far as to identify a 'flexible geography' in courtly romances (74) because the narrative focus rests entirely on the subject, and hence on his or her space perception (76). That might be true to some extent, considering the specific examples quoted by her, i.e., courtly romances, where the fictional character dominates. But (rural) space was not, as we have already observed many times, an arbitrary domain freely available to medieval poets and writers. If we consider, for instance, the *lais* by Marie de France or the anonymous heroic epics

³¹⁴ *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed., trans., and commentary by Klaus Grubmüller. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 23 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996), 898–914; for a commentary, 1307–12.

³¹⁵ See the contributions by Jean E. Jost ("Humorous Transgression in the Non-Conformist *fabliaux*: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Three Comic Tale," 429–55) and Sarah Gordon ("Laughing and Eating in the Old French *Fabliaux*," 481–97) to *Laughter in the Middle Ages*

³¹⁶ Uta Störmer-Caya, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen: Raum und Zeit im höfischen Roman*. de Gruyter Studienbuch (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 70. She also emphasizes: "Wie unter einem Vergrößerungsglas wachsen bei der Schilderung von großen Räumen und von Landschaften auch die Lizenzen gegenüber der Stimmigkeit proportional mit. Das führt dazu, daß dieselbe Landschaft in einer Episode anders aussehen kann als in einer anderen" (73; Like under a magnifying glass the licence regarding the correctness of the described spaces and landscapes grows proportionately. This has the consequence that the same landscape can look differently in one episode compared to another).

Nibelungenlied and *El Poema de Mio Cid*, we can gain quite different perspectives in clear contrast to Störmer-Caysa's arguments.

Andrew Breeze confirms this observation with his careful reading of space references in *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, which are riddled with allusions to specific locations, hills, rivers, forests, dales, etc. Although many scholars have debated, often rather speculatively and contradicting each other, the identification of concrete areas mentioned in these medieval Welsh texts, Breeze can now affirm that the author (perhaps a woman) was very clear about his (her?) own landscape and environment, and did not hesitate at all to build the narratives on a detailed geographic map based on specific knowledge. It might be at times difficult for us today to retrace those locations, but this is not impossible, even when we might not be able to decide on alternatives. We cannot expect that *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* outline a broad, perhaps even universal geographical awareness, such as in Matthew Paris's world chronicle, but, as Breeze underscores, all branches are clearly anchored in concrete geographic contexts.

In fact, rural space emerges as extremely important both for political and military history, which is often also the case in heroic poetry or in Eddic sagas. Older narratives, such as *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, confirm this important aspect, even though there we observe a strong trend to spiritualize the exotic world to the west. Breeze convincingly points out the impressive topography indicated in these Welsh narratives where rural space matters much, both for the protagonists' identity and their political and military maneuvers. In concrete terms, the poet was most familiar with the northwest and southwest of Wales, less so with other regions of that territory and of Ireland and England. But all this should not really come as a surprise since *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* definitely reflect royal and aristocratic power, which was based on land property. There might not be a 'Romantic' idealization of particularly fertile valleys or open fields, of beautiful and charming forests, but we can clearly perceive how much this poet identified with the land and presented it in impressive details.³¹⁷

As the vast corpus of *fabliaux*, then also of *novelle*, *mæren*, and *tales* indicates, already in the high Middle Ages, and especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth

³¹⁷ Gertrud Blaschitz, "Unterwegs in der mittelhochdeutschen Epik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts: Das sprachliche und literarische Erscheinungsbild von Weg und Straße in der Heldenepik, im Frauendienst des Ulrich von Liechtenstein und im Helmbrecht von Wernher dem Gärtner," *Die Welt der europäischen Straßen: Von der Antike bis in die Frühe Neuzeit*, ed. Thomas Szabó (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna 2009), 185-214, has made very similar observations with respect to heroic epics and courtly romances, pointing out numerous specific elements relating to historical roads, streets, bridges, cities, etc., as mentioned in many medieval literary texts. Following her conclusions, it seems too extreme to insist on the total fictionality of medieval narratives. This applies, above all, to the countless references to specific locations in rural space which the literary characters traverse.

centuries poets throughout Europe enjoyed entertaining their audiences with stories about events that happened in the countryside, a space where the topsyturvydom of this world could easily be expressed, and where the social norms prove to be permeable and almost invite transgression. Penny Simons considers the *fabliau* "Bérenger au lonc cul" as one such case, composed by one Guerin. The male protagonist, actually a rich *vilain*, or farmer, has married a noble lady who demonstrates her social status not only through her public performance as a member of her original class, but also through her display of noble characteristics, through which she puts her conniving and incompetent husband to shame. Simons illustrates through her close reading the significance of the constant contrasting of courtly with rural space, or noble person versus the crude farmer. The wit and comedy of this *fabliau* is skillfully predicated on the contrast between both spheres and idealizes, of course, the court, though there is also a sense of betrayal because the lady had to marry so far below her social status for material reasons.

However, the narrative does not criticize the court itself, as the female protagonist is primarily presented as a victim of the social and economic conditions of her personal life and that of her family. Yet, once she has found out the secret of her husband, who only pretends to be a worthy knight allegedly having joined many jousts at a tournament, she shames him into submissiveness and puts on the proverbial trousers, assuming complete control of their household—for an interesting, though ultimately differently structured case, see Dietrich von der Gletze's *Diu borte* (The Belt) from the late thirteenth century.³¹⁸ But the *fabliau* functions so well, as Simons emphasizes, because the author successfully utilizes various literary genres, including the *pastourelle* and the heroic epic, as specific backdrops to the events that take place in the foreground. Most important seems to be, as we learn from Simons's analysis, the social freedom which the wife can enjoy in the rural space because although she is forced to live there with her boorish husband, she knows how to utilize the lack of patriarchal control and can thus revert the gender roles to her great advantage. At the same time, as Simons alerts us, this victory is predicated on the wife's resorting to the traditional misogynist prejudice of women's nymphomaniac tendencies, identifying the lady primarily only through her nether body parts and orifices.

³¹⁸ See my translation in *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany*. Sec. ed. rev. and expanded. Selected and trans. by Albrecht Classen, with a contribution by Maurice Sprague. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 328 (2007; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 19–28. Certainly, Dietrich does not play with the social class difference, but he intriguingly operates with the figure of the weak, perhaps impotent, husband, whose strong and independently minded wife later has to teach him a most embarrassing lesson. See also my article "Disguises, Gender-Bending, and Clothing Symbolism in Dietrich von der Gletze's *Der Borte*," *Seminar* XLV.2 (2009): 95–110.

Considering the villain's futile attempts to prove his manliness and chivalric qualities, we can certainly agree with Simons that this *fabliau* reflects his emasculation, if it does not even reveal a hidden leaning toward homosexuality.

To be sure, the narrative is most centrally located in rural space where the gender role reversal takes place, especially the husband's enormous humiliation. Although the lady was incorrectly married to a wealthy peasant, a tragic inversion of the traditional social structure—the opposite can be the case, as I have argued in my own contribution, but there it is always the noble male who accepts a peasant woman as his wife³¹⁹—she reasserts her position at least as a strong woman who can freely choose her lover, and this even in the presence of her own husband because she scares him with a reference to the ominous knight who had defeated him in the woods.

Most surprisingly, as Simons points out, while the husband hangs his shield of an oak tree in version I, it is a pear tree in version II, which carries strong sexual symbolism and signals even clearer the reversal of gender roles in this *fabliau*. The ironic play on the hagiographic crusading narrative *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, where even the same name, Bérenger, appears, offers additional satirical features to the *fabliau*, especially because of false boasts, which are supported by God in the older text, but not in the latter, where the male protagonist is miserably shamed by his wife. However, the failure to live up to sexual boasts proves to be parallel in both narratives, although the *fabliau* figure does not have any chance of redeeming himself.

At any rate, as Simons suggests, both versions I and II prove to be highly attractive and aim for somewhat different poetological ends, gaining an independent status in their treatment of rural space where sexual failure and gender role reversal happen in a most startling manner, both serving as a medium to critique the rise of the peasant class on the social ladder and their false claim to have gained a higher rank because of their income and wealth. Sexuality determines social conditions, and, most importantly, gender relationships.³²⁰

While I have discussed William Langland's *Piers Plowman* in more general terms above, probing the metaphorical meaning of the rustic and rural space in that

³¹⁹ This is one of the central issues in Andreas Capellanus's treatise (ca. 1190), where he emphasizes that a man who marries a woman of a lower social status keeps his rank, while a woman changes her status according to that of her husband. Andreas aulæ regie capellanus, *De amore*: (see note 261), Book One, vi, 17, pp. 28–30.

³²⁰ Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter* (see note 124). For further discussion, see also Lisa Perfetti, "The Lewd and the Ludic: Female Pleasure in the Fabliaux," *Comic Provocations: Exposing the Corpus of Old French Fabliaux*, ed. Holly A. Crocker. Foreword by R. Howard Bloch. Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 17–31; here 20–21.

allegorical narrative, Daniel F. Pigg turns his attention to specific points in that text dealing with the rural economy and social conditions in the countryside during the late fourteenth century. More specifically, since Langland did not create a paean on the farmer by itself, Pigg probes what the rural ethics might have been since society was in a dangerous stage of instability at the end of the fourteenth century. Reform of society was only possible, as Langland suggested, if all people returned to the fundamental good will, which had to be reconstituted from the bottom up throughout all social classes. This reform, however, was only possible, as Pigg observes, if the traditional feudal norms were reestablished, combined with the old moral and religious principles. Resorting to the primordial labor, plowing, Langland projected an ideal of society that was to be informed by rural ideals. As we will see at the very end of this Introduction, the Middle High German poet Rumelant von Sachsen (thirteenth century) already worked with very similar ideals, then, however, in a religious context.

It would be erroneous to read in Langland's *Plowman* a glorification of the peasant figure. Instead, as Pigg emphasizes, the poet argued for the need to embrace the traditional values that made up the peasantry and the rural world at large, mostly in a religious sense of the word, with an implied reference to Adam (see Fig. 1), insofar as even the first Pope, St. Peter, was identified as a plowman in abstract terms. The readers are reminded that plowing the metaphorical field of life was a general expression for the human pilgrimage toward God. Only if the representatives of all social classes would work together, then there would also be hope for a solid reform of society at large.

Not surprisingly, in *Piers Plowman* the knight voluntarily steps forward and offers his help in plowing the field. Although medieval society was ideally based on the concept of a contract among the three estates, in reality, as Langland averred, the social cohesion had been lost; hence his appeal to return to the traditional values and social structures as in the old days of medieval society—certainly a dream projection, but not far away from a utopian concept.

But Langland was not such an idealist and dreamer that he would have considered the entire lot of peasants as virtual 'angels.' His criticism is not limited to representatives of other social classes; in fact, Langland develops a large-scale and scathing criticism of ethical shortcomings in every corner and on every level of his society. Worst of all, the 'wasters' threatened to undermine all efforts at reform, and other foolish and unethical people are also targeted by the poet's criticism. Greed, like all the other seven deadly sins, needs to be combated by a solid plowing, a powerful and repeatedly employed metaphor in *Piers* that was to ring throughout the late Middle Ages in a number of literary representations.

Since *Piers* seems to adopt some of the social practices in the form of a post-colonial mimicry of the oppression of the wealthy on the laboring poor, as we would formulate it today, his enterprise is in some measure caught in the

ambivalence of his very actions. After all, Langland seems unable to resolve the tension between the worlds of ideal and real. Moving forward is certainly not an easy task. In this sense, as Pigg concludes, he was certainly not a social revolutionary; rather, he strongly advocated an ethical reform grounded in the ancient value system intimately associated with the world of the trustworthy and virtuous farmers.

Interestingly, intermediate spaces between the court and the rural world actually existed in the Middle Ages, if we consider the park at 'Hesdin' enclosed on the order of Robert II, Count of Artois (1250–1302) in 1295. It was neither an estate as described in rough terms by Charlemagne or his scribes in the *Capitulaire de villis* (see above), nor was it one of those parks that added most stunning splendor to Baroque palaces in the sixteenth and especially seventeenth centuries. Abigail P. Dowling offers a detailed analysis of this park, which was considerably more than just a site for aesthetic pleasures in a courtly context, and also more than just an estate with great benefits for its owner. On the basis of the highly detailed and most insightful Artesian account books of Robert II and his daughter, Countess Mahaut of Artois (1302–1329), Dowling has a rich source available to analyze the multifarious purposes of the park, which obviously served both for the members of the court to entertain themselves and to create an extensive economic benefit from its resources. Mahaut obviously fully understood the great value of this rural space, which was to be carefully managed and taken care of to yield, for instance, venison, wood material, fish, and other valuable food items and forest products. 'Hesdin' proved to be a major object of representation for the ducal family, since they relied heavily on the monetary gains resulting from the park and also on the opportunities provided there to live out their aristocratic life style.³²¹

Dowling concentrates on wood, water, and plant harvesting in order to illustrate how much even members of the upper aristocracy were fully aware of the great value of their land properties for both their economic well-being and their aristocratic status. Hesdin provided, after all, a hefty income for the Countess, as the data in the account book reveal. Firewood, for instance, was one of the staple products which customers constantly purchased, and since the forests were so extensive, the timber harvest was most significant. Fishponds were also maintained, but the purpose was not so much the sale of fish, but to have fresh fish available upon the Countess's visit. They also served as breeding grounds for herons, not to mention the growth of watercress.

³²¹ François Duceppe-Lamarre, "La résidence ducale d'Hesdin et sa place dans l'art curial au temps des princes des fleurs de lys (1384–419)," *L'art à la cour de Bourgogne: le mécénat de Philippe le Hardi et de Jean sans Peur (1364–19); les princes des fleurs de lis; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, 28 mai – 15 septembre 2004; The Cleveland Museum of Art, 24 octobre 2004 – 9 janvier 2005*, ed. Sophie Laporte (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004), 160–62.

Very similar to Charlemagne's *Capitulaire de villis*, here we observe a well-organized, centrally planned management of a huge parcel of land where every feature or domain was supposed to contribute to the economic use and to personal consumption. There were also aviaries, and so peacocks and a pet beaver. Moreover, the park allowed the members of the aristocratic household to go hunting both for pleasure and to provide foodstuff for their own needs. Deer, above all, were regarded as a luxury items and hence integral to the master plan for this aristocratic park. The focus on rural space was hence extremely important not only for the peasant population, but for the aristocratic owners of such huge parks as well, since they heavily depended on those estates and made sure that the entire spectrum of their noble household needs were met by the products, animals, and other resources that could be drawn from such a park.³²² Recent research has actually alerted us to the cultural significance of deer hunt in specialized royal parks and forests.³²³

In fact, hunting continued to be of central importance as a major pastime, especially by and for the aristocracy throughout the centuries. This is illustrated also by the humorous treatment of this topic by the most important Neo-Latin poet of the German Baroque, Jakob Balde (1604–1668), in his verse-cycle *De venatione* (first volume, *Sylvae*, 1643). Here he presents in a jocose manner all the arguments for and against hunting, developing fifteen theses and fifteen anti-theses, which finally culminate in the synthesis, in the sixteenth poem, and which then are crowned with a reflective hymn on hunting in the seventeenth poem.³²⁴ Not surprisingly, the interest in the sport of hunting or in hunting as a leisure activity has not abated until today, especially if we think of lion hunting, whale hunting, and other forms of exotic hunting exclusively preserved for the super-wealthy tourists.³²⁵ While rural space, the wilderness above all, represented a threatening

³²² For further research on this park at Hesdin, see, for example, Birgit Franke, "Gesellschaftsspiele mit Automaten: 'Merveilles' in Hesdin," *Kunst als ästhetisches Ereignis*, ed. Ulrich Schütte. Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft, 24 (Marburg: Kunstgeschichtliches Institut, 1997), 135–58; François Duceppe-Lamarre, "Une économie de l'imaginaire à l'oeuvre: le cas de la réserve cynégétique d'Hesdin (Artois, XIIIe – XVe siècles)," *Les forêts d'Occident du Moyen Age à nos jours: actes des XXIVes Journées Internationales d'Histoire de l'Abbaye de Flaran*, 6, 7, 8 septembre 2002, ed. Andrée Corvol-Dessert. Flaran, 24 (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2004), 39–55.

³²³ John Fletcher, *Gardens of Earthly Delight: The History of Deer Parks* (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2011). For further comments on this book, see below.

³²⁴ *Das Jagdbuch De venatione (Sylvae 1) des Barockdichters Jakob Balde*. Einführung, Text, Übersetzung, Interpretation by Eckard Lefèvre. Spudasmata, 140 (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Georg Olms, 2011). For a broader survey of relevant studies, treatises, and illustrations, see *Hunting, Hawking, Shooting, Illustrated in a Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, Prints and Drawings*, collected by C. F. G. R. Schwerdt (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2001).

³²⁵ *Recreational Hunting, Conservation, and Rural Livelihoods*, ed. Barney Dickson, Jon Hutton, and William M. Adams (Oxford, UK, and Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 2009). See also *Tourism and the Consumption of Wildlife: Hunting, Shooting and Sport Fishing*, ed. Brent Lovelock. Routledge Studies

terrain, mankind has increasingly conquered the forest or the prairie and colonized that natural space, transforming it more and more into a terrain for its own entertainment and as the location for its necessary resources. Hunting represents only one of those activities through which the untamed, 'free' rural space was systematically, though, fortunately, until today not comprehensively and totally, colonized and 'civilized.' The extent to which, however, aristocratic society pursued its most favored leisure activity, the hunt, throughout the ages, indicates the true extent to which society has consistently viewed wild nature as its God-given domain.

While Dowling concentrates on one major park, 'Hesdin,' Marilyn L. Sandidge takes a broader approach, examining the long-term development of royal gardens and parks in the English history, beginning in the early/high Middle Ages and taking us all the way to the Stuart dynasty. As she emphasizes immediately, and rightly so, early-medieval rulers regularly seized complete control over large swaths of land which they then transformed into royal domains, or parks, as they would be regarded in later times. These served as hunting grounds, but also as an economic base. By the thirteenth century, approximately one quarter of all land in England was under the king's control, which underscores the supreme importance of rural space throughout the Middle Ages, since it was a commodity of highest value for which many parties competed as much as possible.

Poaching happened, of course, quite often, especially because some hunters pursued their activity out of economic necessity, while others deliberately tried to transgress the king's rule, and others again pursued monetary goals out of sheer greed, considering the high price for venison; not to forget the opportunity to establish or reinforce one's masculine identity through poaching.

Throughout the Middle Ages royalty enjoyed setting up menageries, like medieval zoos, or live cabinets of curiosities, in German later known as *Wunderkammern*, which allowed them to demonstrate their resources, their political power, and especially their control over wild nature in all of its exotic features.³²⁶ Charlemagne (crowned emperor in 800), had three zoos, one in Aachen,

in Contemporary Geographies of Leisure, 9 (London: Routledge, 2008).

³²⁶ Vicki Croke, *The Modern Ark: The Story of Zoos: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Scribner, 1997); Albrecht Classen, "Tiere als Symbole der höfischen Welt," *Tiere als Freunde im Mittelalter* (see note 129), 20–31; Lothar Dittrich, *Die Kulturgeschichte des Zoos* (Berlin: VWB, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 2001; Eric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004). For an example from the Baroque period, see Samuel Wittwer, *Die Galerie der Meißener Tiere: die Menagerie Augusts des Starken für das Japanische Palais in Dresden*. Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft der Keramikfreunde e.V. Düsseldorf, 1 (Munich: Hirmer, 2004). For a very broad introduction to animals in the Middle Ages, see Janetta Rebold Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie* (see note 35); for the early-modern menagerie, see Joan Pieragnoli, *La ménagerie de Versailles* (Arles: Clair, 2010). See also the useful article on "Cabinet of Curiosities,"

one in Nijmegen, and one in Ingelheim, housing elephants, monkeys, lions, bears, camels, and birds of prey. Astonishingly, “[i]n 797, the caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid, presented Charlemagne with an Asian elephant named Abul-Abbas. The pachyderm arrived on July 1, 802 to the Emperor’s residence in Aachen. He died in June 810.”³²⁷ One of the sons of William the Conqueror, Henry I, turned his hunting lodge at Woodstock, which had earlier been a royal hunting ground for Anglo-Saxon kings, into a palace, expanding the area, enclosing it, and bringing in a collection of animals which had a little menagerie at Woodstock. At about 1100 his son Henry I expanded the area, enclosed it, and increased the number of animals, the collection of which was said to have included lions, leopards, lynxes, camels, owls and a porcupine.³²⁸ Many other kings and princes all over Europe followed these models since the exotic nature of those animals could only improve the aristocratic aura of their owner.³²⁹ Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) was as proud about his own elephant as King Henry III of England (1207–1272), although their pachyderms did not carry a name as Charlemagne’s one did. This changed only by the sixteenth century, when Pope Leo X (1475–1521) gave the name of ‘Hanno’ to his specimen, and Emperor Maximilian I (1495–1519) the name of ‘Suleyman’ to his elephant.³³⁰

Little wonder, for instance, that medieval and early-modern coats of arms are strongly determined by specific animal imagery, which always represent particular characteristics, values, and ideals typical of the courtly world.³³¹ Similarly, no wonder that many laws were issued that regulated the control of the wild animals, reserving them for the pleasure of kings and other members of the aristocracy, to the great disadvantage of the rural population.

Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_curiosities (last accessed on Dec. 12, 2011). The focus rests, naturally, on those cabinets of curiosities as they dominated in the early modern age, such as at Castle Ambras, near Innsbruck, since we know so much more about those, but that idea had certainly medieval roots. See Dirk Steffens, *Das tierische Kuriositätenkabinett* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009).

³²⁷ Quoted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menagerie> (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2011); see also James, Fisher, *Zoos of the World: The Story of Animals in Captivity* (London: Aldus Book, 1966), 40; Franco Cardini, *Europe and Islam* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 14–15. This elephant has now finally become the object of more detailed research; see Achim Thomas Hack, *Abul Abaz: Zur Biographie eines Elefanten*. Jenaer mediävistische Vorträge, 1 (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2011).

³²⁸ Wilfrid Blunt, *The Ark in the Park: The Zoo in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Hamilton, 1976), 15–17.

³²⁹ Bob Mullan and Garry Marvin, *Zoo Culture: The Book about Watching People Watch Animals* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 109.

³³⁰ Hack, *Abul Abaz* (see note 327), 31–32.

³³¹ Václav Vok Filip, *Einführung in die Heraldik*. 2nd ed. Historische Grundwissenschaften in Einzeldarstellungen, 3 (Stuttgart; Franz Steiner, 2011), 79–84.

As Sandidge emphasizes, hunting was, of course, one of the most important noble pastimes, so the park, or the seemingly wild forest—often really only a domesticated zone cut out of nature—served as a strategic staging ground for aristocratic culture. One of the examples to which she refers in her contribution to this volume was the English King Henry II, who was famous for his passion for hunting, and had consequently huge forest areas reserved for his private entertainment. Not surprisingly, many contemporary chroniclers and writers, such as Marie de France, included hunting scenes focusing on a king who almost seems to be obsessed almost too much with hunting and thus ultimately might lose his self-control.³³²

In the early modern time the circumstances became more complicated for the king, since he could no longer simply occupy or claim forests or other rural space for his own personal use. The legal constraints forced him, as in the case of King Henry VIII, to buy or to acquire through legal seizure the land which was later to become Hyde Park and St. James Park. Those parks quickly transformed from simple woodsy areas where the wild animals could roam freely to a staging ground of performative hunts and entertainment both for the royal court and foreign guests.³³³ Henry tried hard to compete with the French King, Francis I, in developing the public splendor of his own royal parks, where he even put up some wooden sculptures of animals as decorative elements. Rural space was increasingly transformed into a theatrical stage for the royal self-representation.

King James I seems to have been one of the most avid hunters, since this activity occupied his mind to an almost excessive degree, as we can tell from many complaints from his contemporaries, since he even neglected some of his royal duties in favor of hunting. At the same time, James endeavored to transform the St. James Garden into a more domesticated space, with a zoo populated by exotic animals, an aviary, and ponds. With this operation the once wild area of rural space had been changed not only into hunting grounds, but specifically into a royal garden for spectacular artistic representations. James's son, King Charles I,

³³² A similar concern about how to hunt properly, and how to cut up the prey in an artistic way, not like brutish butchers would do, comes to the fore in Gottfried von Strassburg's famous *Tristan* (ca. 1210), where the protagonist interrupts King Mark's hunters when they are about to cut apart a deer, and teaches them how to do the same process in a most delicate, i.e., artistic fashion. Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, trans. Rüdiger Krohn. 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), vv. 2759–3080; cf. Hugo Bekker, *Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan: Journey Through the Realm of Eros*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1987), 67–82.

³³³ For another example, see Amanda Richardson, *The Forest, Park and Palace of Clarendon, c. 1200–c. 1650: Reconstructing an Actual, Conceptual and Documented Wiltshire Landscape*. BAR British Series, 387 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005). Cf. also *Oxfordshire Forests 1246–1609*, ed. Beryl Schumer. Oxfordshire Record Society, 64 ([Oxford]: Oxfordshire Record Society, 2004).

extended this new approach and realized the next stage in the development of the park, now making it into a museum for his aesthetic enjoyment.

In fact, each generation worked on this and other parks, leaving strong marks on them reflecting their own preferences and cultural orientation. Rural space is malleable and can easily be manipulated by people, as Sandidge's comprehensive and detailed survey reveals. Contemporary literature confirms her observations, since poets regularly commented on the public display of royal splendor, especially within the park setting, and on a hunt. Especially Restoration authors delighted in utilizing the park as a backdrop of their plays and other texts, especially because of their interest to present the gentleman and his women in the proper social environment. The study of rural space in this regard allows Sandidge to develop a new perspective on the historical transformation of English monarchy from the early Middle Ages to the time of the Hanoverian Stuarts.

Despite the common assumption regarding courtly literature, focusing on the adventures of knights and damsels in distress, limiting most actions to the sphere of the court as the point of departure and return, with a few glimpses into the wild forest as the stage for the knight's challenges (robbers and giants, sometimes magical events), rural space claimed a rather significant space even in this literary genre. Penny Simons focuses on the Old French *Guillaume de Palerne* from the turn of the twelfth to the thirteenth century in order to demonstrate the amorphous nature of knightly existence as described in those texts. It is clearly built on the narrative plot as originally developed by Marie de France in her *lai* "Bisclavret," working with a werewolf who operates, so to speak, as the good fairy helping the male protagonist Guillaume to be rescued from his abduction and eventual rediscovery and recognition by his own family.

As Simons recognizes, the anonymous poet of *Guillaume de Palerne* operates with two very distinct concepts of space, the first being the court, which proves to be mostly stationary, and the second being the forest, the countryside, big bodies of water, and the like. The major events take place only in the second realm of spaces, though the protagonists regularly return, in conformity with the traditional courtly romance, to the central courts for recognition and settling problematic situations, which ultimately helps the narrator to take us to a happy end. Beyond those two spheres, however, the romance also works with an intermediate space, the *vergier*, that is, an orchard or park, and once even a quarry, which are all both domesticated and wild, where the two lovers can successfully meet or flee to, and where important events take place determining their future destiny, especially because these spaces also bring about the protagonists' transformations. They serve, in other words, as significant launching pads, so to speak, for future events. At the same time, as Simons points out, the narrative proves to be a rich tapestry of narrative elements borrowed from earlier works, which underscore the

importance of intermediate, that is, partly rural, partly courtly space, for the critical development of the courtly hero. He requires the exposure to the natural world in order to find himself, to grow into a mature adult, and then to face the challenges of this world most constructively and efficiently. The open attitude toward the rural space is also characterized by the interest in including facetious elements, offering a sense of light-heartedness, which breaks open the traditional crystalline structure of courtly romances and allows for perspectives into social and natural reality behind the literary screen.

The werewolf's behavior carries considerably comic features, and there might already be a foreshadowing of the tradition of the *fabliaux* in this text, particularly considering the numerous incongruities. At times the animal (werewolf) helps the humans, at other times they come to his assistance, and we strongly feel amused by the multiple doubling of events and characters since even the werewolf is nothing but a human being turned into that beast by magic. Hybridity both in the presentation of space and in the characterization of the protagonists underscore the unique properties of this text, which makes it possible for the anonymous poet—in this specific regard much more so than in the case of Marie de France's "Bisclavret"—to project the non-courtly setting as highly instrumental, hence essential for the plot development.³³⁴ Simons concludes with an additional observation regarding the ultimate purpose of those intermediate spaces outside of the court and yet not quite in the wild forest. Here the poet could experiment and utilize many different literary genres, narrative strategies, and styles from the 'classical' period of courtly literature and create a hybrid romance in which the rural is finally intimately intertwined with the courtly.³³⁵

The forest, as threatening and obscure as it always seems to be in the premodern world, emerges as a rather complex territory where the relationships between man and nature are constantly renegotiated throughout time. It could be a site of dangers where robbers, murderers, and wild animals threaten to ambush the unassuming individual, or it could be the location where farmers and others find invaluable resources (wood for building and burning, acorns for pigs, animals for hunting, etc.).³³⁶ This finds extraordinary and highly vivid expression in *Li*

³³⁴ See the extensive discussions on this phenomenon in Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human* (see note 130), 144–96.

³³⁵ For parallels in contemporary German literature, see Stephan Fuchs, *Hybride Helden: Gwigalois und Willehalm: Beiträge zum Heldenbild und zur Poetik des Romans im frühen 13. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik, 31 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1997). As to Marie de France's "Bisclavret," see Matilde Tomaryn Bruckner, "Of Men and Beasts in Bisclavret," *Romanic Review* 81.3 (1991): 251–69.

³³⁶ I have discussed the diverse functions of the medieval forest already above; for the appearance of the forest as a sylvan idyll in the early-modern history, see Jeffrey S. Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation*. Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies

Roumans de Berte aus Grans piés composed in 1273 by the minstrel Adenet le Roi, which Rosa A. Perez studies in detail in her contribution to this volume. Adenet presents the topical scene with Berte, married to Pepin the Brief, father of the future Charlemagne. Having been betrayed by a female servant and her daughter, who replaces Berte during the first wedding night because Berthe is told that the initial sexual encounter with her husband would be very painful, she is accused of falsely posing as the real queen, is hence expelled from the court, and then finds refuge in the forest. There she manages to get enough resources and support to maintain her identity and to establish enough resiliency to oppose the court's and her husband's accusations. In this way, ultimately, the forest turns into a springboard for her return to the court as the esteemed queen, the innocently persecuted wife, victim of her husband's wrath and slander.³³⁷

Although the original legend of this tale situates the events at the eighth-century Carolingian court, Adenet places his epic tale in the thirteenth century, obviously to appeal to his audience and to make the story as topical as possible. The forest in which Berthe has to survive among simple folks regularly reflects her own inner turmoil and crisis, but then it also begins to provide her with the necessary shelter and protection from external threats. However, as Perez alerts us, all this does not make the forest into a safe place for her, on the contrary. Twice Berthe barely escapes the danger of being raped, and can protect her virginity, the critical aspect of all her hopes ever to return to the court and to regain her legitimate position as the king's consort and wife. She also manages to get away from a dangerous bear, and so can survive, although the most egregious threats for her rest outside of the forest, at court.

The narrative intriguingly illustrates the importance of the edge of the forest where Berthe finds employment with Symon and his family, the last, or first, signs of civilization for the queen, except for her encounter with the hermit in the midst of the forest who had helped her to get on the right path out of her desperation and helplessness.³³⁸ Moreover, the forest setting also allows the reunion with her husband to happen who encounters his true wife in the forest, at a kind of *locus amoenus*. At first he almost would have raped her, but then she reveals her true identity, which solves the conflict and brings the two people finally and happily

(Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009).

³³⁷ Rudolf Schenda, "Adenet le Roi," *Enzyklopädie des Märchens: Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung*, ed. Kurt Ranke et al. Vol. I (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 103–06.

³³⁸ In a number of different contexts, the edge of the forest proves to be a critical site, meaningfully situated between the wild and the civilized, the tamed and the untamed. We might even call it the liminal space, highly significant in epistemological terms. Walther von der Vogelweide, for instance, has his lovers meet at the edge of the forest where the linden tree guarantees them some distance from society, yet still keeps them safely away from the forest dangers. See the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

together again. As Perez emphasizes, without the forest the servant woman's treason would have had catastrophic consequences, although the forest itself also proves to be highly dangerous for the protagonist. But insofar as it is a kind of exile location for her, she finds enough safety in or at the edge of the forest where she then can develop her true character and ultimately gain the critical inner strength and confidence, based on piety and humility, which will make it possible for her to recover her legitimate position within royal society. The forest as the location where the exile spends his/her time was of great importance in the Middle Ages (see, for instance, the mythical figure of Robin Hood), although absolute safety was also not to be had there.³³⁹ As Adenet's narrative illustrates, neither the court nor the rough and wild forest could exist by itself, or, more broadly formulated, both civilization and nature depended on each other in material, political, religious, and even ethical and moral terms insofar as the female protagonist really matures only in the forest and there learns how to survive even under dangerous conditions. This learning experience then readies her for precarious existence at court, a situation that we will encounter, most poignantly, in the Middle English *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* composed ca. hundred years later (see above).³⁴⁰

Late-medieval Spain witnessed the creation of one of the most important hunting books, Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza* (ca. 1325). While most other aristocrats were only interested in ordinary, playful entertainment, this duke turned his attention to literature, especially to writing or contributing to the creation of books of literary, didactic, and moral-religious kind. Maria Cecilia Ruiz presents a detailed study of the author and his work, which proves to be a worthy successor to the publications by his uncle, Alfonso X the Wise, who had died in 1284, when Juan Manuel was only two years old. Important to note, Manuel expressively voiced his admiration for his uncle in the *Libro de la caza*, even though in the latter part he

³³⁹ See the contributions to *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002*, ed. Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004); Bob Becking, *From Babylon to Eternity: The Exile Remembered and Constructed in Text and Tradition* (London: Equinox, 2009); Albrecht Classen, "The Experience of Exile in Medieval German Heroic Poetry," *Medieval German Textrelations: Translations, Editions, and Studies (Kalamazoo Papers 2010-2011)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, # (Göppingen: Kümmerle, forthcoming).

³⁴⁰ Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (see note 143). We encounter a very similar situation with the heroine escaping into the forest, persecuted by the evil courtiers and a wrathful husband, in Elisabeth of Nassau-Saarbrücken's *Königin Sibille* (see my discussion above). For a discussion of young women, see the contributions to *Young Medieval Women*, ed. Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge, and Kim M. Phillips (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). For historical and literary-historical background for actual figure of Berthe, see http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrade_de_Laon (last accessed on Dec. 30, 2011).

moved away from the early emulation and gained a more independent and mature position. Despite its title, the author predominantly is concerned with hunting using birds of prey, closely following the Arabic tradition, which had influenced earlier books in Spanish dealing with hunting, and probably also Emperor Frederick II's famous book *De arte venandi cum avibus* from ca. 1241–1248.

In many ways, hunting was an important art which young nobles were supposed to learn from early on. Reading about hunting hence was supposed to be a significant teaching tool because it helped to realize strongly didactic goals.³⁴¹ At the same time Manuel advocated hunting and reading about it as critically important venues for male bonding, something we will hear about as well in Jacqueline Stuhmiller's subsequent article on Gaston Phébus.

There are a number of possibilities of how Manuel's *Libro de la caza* might have come about, but, as Ruiz emphasizes, the scribe must have closely collaborated with the author. It is well possible that he accompanied his lord on the hunt, read to him from his own notes, and discussed sections with him while putting down the words. Most significantly, the author highlighted the difference between theory and practice, arguing that only a truly experienced falconer would be able to acquire the full art of hunting with these birds fully. Certainly, his own book represents a theoretical approach as well, but the next generation of readers would thus be able to learn from a true master in that field.

In reality, however, everything might be quite different, so each person would have to work very closely and sensitively with the hunting birds as the situation demanded. Juan Manuel himself was apparently directly involved with the raising and taming of falcons, as he regularly injects his specific opinions, based on his own experiences, concerning how to feed the birds, how to treat them in case of sickness, and the like.

As Ruiz concludes, Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza* emerges as an astonishingly personal record of an almost autobiographical nature. The author appears directly present here, since he voices his opinion, debates with his scribe, injects observations and comments, and allows us to perceive in great detail what he personally thought about hunting, especially with birds of prey. Manuel was only too aware of the trend among hunters—as is still the case today—to brag, to tell miraculous accounts, and to exaggerate as to the hunted animals or the amazing skills of the hunting animals/birds of prey. Hence he constantly emphasized how true his own account was because he spoke from personal experience and had had great success in falconry, which was only superseded by his greatly admired cousin, Don Juan. Hunting is described as a sport and general activity that can easily produce marvelous results, even if the readers/listeners might not want to believe it.

³⁴¹ This is also confirmed by Jacqueline Stuhmiller in her contribution to this volume.

Highly excited by the realization of how much he was an expert in hunting, Juan Manuel clearly felt that in writing his *Libro de la caza* he could aspire to match the accomplishments of his admired uncle, Alfonso X the Wise. As much as Manuel proved to be a learned writer, he also drew heavily from his personal experience, which he was obviously very proud of. It would be too far-fetched, of course, here to talk about an early Renaissance voice, but this hunting manual brings the author so much to life that we almost see him in front of our eyes. Although he mostly talked about hunting, Juan Manuel really presented himself as the expert hunter that he was in highly individualizing terms. After all, following his teachers' advice, he began a new era of hunting with much better results, whether we would have to identify this as medieval or Renaissance. This hunter-author and hunter-teacher perceived in this pastime an ideal way of getting excitement, of applying one's technical skills, and of establishing comradery among all men involved in the hunt.

To reiterate the previous observation and to include some literary examples, hunting was one of the central pastimes of medieval and early aristocracy, and poets and artists throughout time, sometimes even musicians, have intensively reflected upon it in a myriad of fashions and interpreted it in many different ways as a metaphor of love, of courtliness, and, allegorically, as an expression of human vices and virtues.³⁴² For instance, Tristan, in Gottfried von Strassburg's eponymous romance (ca. 1210), makes his significant entry to the court of King Mark of Cornwall after he has instructed the hunters to cut up the corpse of a slain deer in a most artistic fashion, which then allows him to arrange the transportation of the carcass, now an art object, as a most impressive public procession.³⁴³ Guigemar's

³⁴² See, for instance, Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974); see also the contributions to *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), and to *Die Jagd der Eliten in den Erinnerungskulturen von der Antike bis in die Frühe Neuzeit*, ed. Wolfram Martini. Formen der Erinnerung, 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000). For an impressive example of the poetic strategy to allegorize the hunt, see the thirteenth-century poet Hadamar von Laber, *Jagd und drei andere Minnegerichte seiner Zeit und Weise: Des Minners Klage, Der minnenden Zwiist und Versöhnung, Der Minne-Falkner*, ed. J. A. Schmeller. Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 20 (1850; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1968). The poem *Jagd* has survived in ten complete manuscripts and eight fragments. See Sonja Emmerling, *Hadamars von Laber und seine Liebesdichtung "Die Jagd"*. Forum Mittelalter, 2 (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2005); Ralf Schlechtweg-Jahn, "Hadamars von Laber 'Jagd' als serielle Literatur," *Triviale Minne? Konventionalität und Trivialisierung in spätmittelalterlichen Minnereden*, ed. Ludger Lieb and Otto Neudeck. Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte, 40 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 241–58.

³⁴³ Bekker, *Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan* (see note 332); cf. also Elisabeth Schmid, "Natur und Kultur in der Jagdszene von Gottfrieds 'Tristan'," *Der "Tristan" Gottfrieds von Straßburg: Symposium Santiago de Compostela, 5. bis 8. April 2000*, ed. Christoph Huber and Victor Millet (Tübingen: Max

destiny in Marie de France's eponymous *lai* (ca. 1200) takes a decisive turn when he goes hunting, kills a doe, but is badly hurt in his thigh from the ricocheting arrow—certainly a highly unlikely result, but essential for the narrative development. Seeking help, he finds a black ship that magically takes him across the water where he finds his future love. Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) is invited to a hunt as part of Hagen's strategy to catch him unaware and thus to murder him. Siegfried demonstrates, for the last time, his superior, almost god-like strength and power by hunting down so many animals that the other hunters begin to grumble and complain, asking him to stop so that some animals remain for future hunts. Siegfried does not understand, of course, that this hunt, in which he even captures a bear alive, anticipates his own victimization. He will be Hagen's prey, but then in a different, morally depraved hunt. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the Green Knight, Sir Bercilak, goes hunting as part of his wager with the protagonist. Both have pledged to share with the other what they might catch during the day. While Bercilak kills especially one symbolic animal a day, which represent one of Gawain's character traits and abilities, the latter is actually hunted by Bercilak's wife who tries to seduce him while he is still in bed early in the morning, though she can only convince him to accept her kiss.

One of the most famous medieval writers dealing with the hunt, apart from Frederick II and Juan Manuel, was Gaston Phébus, Count of Foix, who composed his *Livre de la chasse* (Hunting Book) between 1387 and 1389. Jacqueline Stuhmiller offers here an insightful analysis of how the author viewed the relationship between animals and man from a religious and ethical perspective. As a base of her study she relies on the manuscript BN ms fr 619, less famous than the much acclaimed manuscript BN ms fr 616, which I have discussed above. However, her choice is determined by the specific approach to hunting with all its ethical and moral implications, which are much more strongly expressed in that version.

According to the biblical account (*Genesis*), the animal kingdom is subject to man's rule, but in the postlapsarian world many animals remain dangerous to man and can easily kill him if the latter is not properly prepared and does not have the necessary weapons. In the Middle Ages, the human hegemony over all animals was not stable, and had to be reestablished over and over again, considering how many dangerous animals threatened human existence. Hence the general justification for hunting, although this was really an aristocratic sport, and

Niemeyer, 2002), 153–66. She emphasizes, "diese Inszenierung [stellt] die Simulation des lebendigen Tiers mit Mitteln der Kunst dar[]. Zugleich tritt der Akt als Gesamtkunstwerk – garniert mit einer Musikeinlage – in Erscheinung" (165; this enactment represents the simulation of the living animal with the means of art. At the same time the act appears, combined with musical embellishment, as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*). See also John G. Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988). Research on this topic is truly legion, obviously because of the great metaphorical meaning of this scene.

less a defense mechanism. Although dogs were treated with great respect either as lap dogs or serving for hunting, they remained beasts that could easily reveal their evil side, as Gaston saw it,³⁴⁴ and which we could easily confirm even today with respect to some particularly aggressive breeds, such as Pitbulls or Rottweilers.³⁴⁵

As Stuhmiller emphasizes, for Gaston people were surrounded by a most threatening natural environment, whether we think of the bear or the equally, if not even more fear-inspiring wolf. Simultaneously, the very evil and brutal nature of those animals—at least as perceived by medieval authors, such as Gaston—made them into ideal hunting objects because the knight was thus able to demonstrate his personal skills in evading the threat and in killing the beasts. Insofar as the hunter manages to overcome the large variety of dangerous animals, he can also reconstitute the prelapsarian conditions when man was the absolute ruler over all animals.

Oddly, as a side note, this is the very conditions characterizing the wild man in Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (ca. 1177) or Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* (ca. 1203), mostly a translation of the Old French text. In the Middle High German romance the gigantic man explains to Kalogrenant, "My voice and my hand, my command and my threats have brought them to the point where they stand trembling before and act—or desist from acting—in accordance with my wish. If anyone else were to be among them as I am, he would quickly be lost . . . With me here they will do you no harm. . . ."³⁴⁶

Gaston underscored that the true, morally and ethically upright hunter would not resort unnecessarily to contraptions and deceptions; instead he should hunt in a virtuous, knightly fashion, displaying his true *maïstrise*, that is, mastery over the wild animals.³⁴⁷ While Gaston strongly encouraged his readers to chase only

³⁴⁴ For positive images of the dog in medieval German courtly literature, see Albrecht Classen, "The Dog in German Courtly Literature" (see note 241).

³⁴⁵ For a extensive list of dangerous dogs, see <http://www.toptenmostdangerousdogs.com/> (last accessed on Dec. 30, 2011).

³⁴⁶ *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue* (see note 220), 242. See also the new edition and translation, Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein: Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. and trans. Rüdiger Krohn, commentary by Mireille Schnyder (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2011), v. 506–13. Some artist subsequently created a most impressive fresco *al secco* of this scene on Castle Rodenegg in Southern Tyrol (north of Brixen/Bressanone); see Volker Schupp and Hans Szklenar, *Yvain auf Schloß Rodenegg: Eine Bildergeschichte nach dem 'Iwein' Hartmanns von Aue* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1996), plates 2 and 3.

³⁴⁷ This approach seems to be a faint echo of the early-medieval warrior ethics, as expressed, for instance, by Beowulf in the eponymous Old English heroic epic (ca. 1000, or earlier), where the protagonist insists on fighting against Grendel without weapons: "' . . . but in the night we two shall forgo swords if he dares to look for combat without weapons, and afterward let God in his wisdom, the holy Lord assign glory on whichever hand he sees fit.'" *The Beowulf Manuscript: Complete Texts and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and trans. R. D. Fulk. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval

those animals that were a true match for the hunter's skills, the wolf was considered simply a menace that had to be eliminated at all costs, irrespective of the brutal slaughter that was implied. The wolf, so Gaston, appeared very similar to man, and yet absolutely refused to submit under his *maîtrise*, which hence justified its merciless destruction. At the same time, Gaston expressed delight in hunting also small animals, such as the hare and the otter, perhaps as a particular kind of entertainment. In 1492, the Duke of Pommerania publicly encouraged people of all social classes to go hunting and to kill virtually every animal which they could get. For each dead wolf, lynx, and bear he was willing to pay a correspondingly higher amount of reward, while the hunters could simply keep the dead geese, ducks, or birds of prey for themselves. In other words, the animals were regarded as man's enemies and had to be hunted down out of a sense of self-protection.³⁴⁸

The *Livre de la chasse* strongly encourages the readers to learn the art of hunting well because a knowledgeable and skillful hunter would not have to worry about getting wounded or hurt since he is, with all his intellect and weapons, strategizing abilities and support (dogs and sub-hunters) the true master of the forest and its inhabitants. The illustrator/s of this manuscript confirm this overall message, showing how rapacious and dangerous some of the animals might be, anxious to attack and to devour the hunter or other people, but all this without any true effect because the human master has everything under his control, at least once he has learned his trade well. A good indicator of this general approach prove to be the peaceful natural settings in the miniatures as if the forest were nothing but a *locus amoenus*, a pastoral place where the knights exercise their right as lords of the wild space and all the wild animals. As gruesome as the hunt itself might be, the illustrators project nothing but tame nature, similar to the scenes in the contemporary *Books of Hours*. This rural space appears as predictable and two-dimensional, where the knight performs his privileged duty as a hunter, dominating all animals at will.

Nevertheless, we should also not overlook, as Stuhmiller alerts us, the increasingly religious undertones of this famous hunting book because for Gaston hunting eventually seems to turn into a spiritual quest, making all good hunters predestined for their own salvation in heaven. Whether the author was heavily tortured by a sense of sinfulness resulting from some unnamed crime or sin, as the conclusion seems to indicate, cannot be fully confirmed. In many ways, as Stuhmiller concludes, the author attempted to respond to the messages contained

³⁴⁸ Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 683–87, p. 131.
 Helmut Jäger, *Einführung in die Umweltgeschichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), 134; Johannes Grabmayer, *Europa im späten Mittelalter 1250–1500: Eine Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichte*. Kultur und Mentalität (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2004), 139–40.

in *Genesis* and identified the hunt as one of the most effective mediums to reconfirm man's absolute control over all animals.³⁴⁹

Since there are virtually no women involved in hunting, at least as far as Gaston prescribes and described it,³⁵⁰ the ancient threat of Eve as man's seductress was not present. The author idealized men's hunting as the one safe area in his time where traditional values of a masculine society were still at place insofar as man, as God's representative here on earth, was completely in charge of his life and was fully entitled to kill any animal that he could catch. I suppose that this underlying ideology continues to determine many modern hunters' minds since killing animals provides the individual with a supreme sense of power, as ruthless or brutal as that killing might be.³⁵¹

As I have already mentioned in passing, late-medieval art increasingly turned its attention to rural space and recognized how valuable the natural environment really could be either for spiritual enlightenment or for practical purposes. Both love and religion found best expression in nature, either as a threat or as an inviting location. This renewed interest in rural space in the late Middle Ages can be best observed in the famous genre of the *Books of Hours*, which I discuss in a separate contribution to this volume. In order to grasp better what the function of the natural world might be as it increasingly crops up in this mostly private genre of religious books serving personal devotion, I first outline the basic structure of most *Books of Hours*, and then discuss the central functions of the major parts.

Most significant would be that the late Middle Ages witnessed a tremendous growth in interest in this genre, which led to a certain standardization in the book production. The artists followed suit, which makes our assessment of how to evaluate the true quality of nature scenes in these *Books of Hours* somewhat problematic. But the variety of scenes and details depicted here still confirms how much the artists were conscious of the necessity to copy not only from model books, but also to consider characteristic features of the agricultural world at

³⁴⁹ See also Stuhmiller's insightful article, "Poaching and Carnival," *Humanity and the Natural World*, ed. David Hawkes (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), where she identifies poaching as a form of hunting that could almost be equated with warfare, pitting peasants against the nobles, or aristocratic neighbors against each other. She utilizes the term 'Carnival' in order to indicate how much poaching inverted traditional social order. I like to express my gratitude for her letting me see the manuscript before its publication.

³⁵⁰ For women as hunters in the Middle Ages, see Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas: Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 59 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); for examples of women hunters in the early modern period, see the contribution to the present volume by Martha Moffitt Peacock.

³⁵¹ Wayne Pacelle, *The Bond: Our Kinship With Animals, Our Call to Defend Them* (New York: William Morrow, 2011), offers a variety of perspectives on human-animal relations, and overall argues in favor of animal rights, criticizing man's hunting craze.

specific times of the year, so that they could illustrate the individual months as recognizable as possible. We face two curious phenomena; on the one hand the artists copied from each other, and yet they often made serious efforts to incorporate new elements, new details, and new settings. The careful comparison of a large number of *Books of Hours* allows us to recognize an increasing opening toward the natural world and the realization of the independent importance and beauty of rural space for all people, irrespective of their social standing.

As much as these devotional texts targeted primarily (female) members of the aristocracy, as much did the artists endeavor to trace almost meticulously all kinds of characteristic activities on the farm, on the pasture, and in the forests. We can list countless examples of specific situations and work activities as they occur in the countryside. The art of Jan van Eyck (ca. 1395 – before 9 July 1441) would be some of the closest to the images included in the *Books of Hours*, as formulaic these miniatures might be.³⁵² Quite naturally we observe the extent to which the biblical scenes stand in the foreground, but even the most trite and commonly known one of them is now increasingly projected in a natural environment. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to determine exactly where the artistic, stylized elements come to an end and natural representation based on eye-witness accounts comes in. The *Book of Hours* hover somewhere in-between, so they truly reflect the pending paradigm shift both in the history of art and in the generic approach to rural space at large, with the appearance of (stylized) late-medieval realism.

As we can conclude, the *Books of Hours* allowed the full integration of the rural world, i.e., the farm life, into the sphere of aristocratic art, as religiously determined that was. At times we detect children playing, many other times we see the sweaty and exhausted plowman, and everywhere we see a constantly growing delight in the specifics of the natural space with its plants, animals, birds, trees, but then also of people working in the fields, enjoying their pastime, or traversing that rural space for many different purposes. The iconography still can, or must, be read through the lens of religious symbolism, yet the care and love with which these rural episodes have been designed strongly suggest a significant paradigm shift in man's attitude toward his natural environment beginning in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Although it would be, most unfortunately, futile to include any of these images, simply because there are just too many and their aesthetic appeal cannot be easily

³⁵² See the contributions to *Das leuchtende Mittelalter*, ed. Jacques Dalarun. Aus dem Französischen von Birgit Lamerz-Beckschäfer. 3rd ed. (2002; Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2011). Many times examples drawn from *Books of Hours* are discussed here as illustrations that serve to contradict the old but completely erroneous myth regarding the 'dark Middle Ages.' We can add that our modern myth about the medieval world being entirely dominated by the aristocratic court and the church is also entirely wrong.

reproduced without major efforts inappropriate for our purposes in this book, our discussion of many different *Books of Hours* lays the foundation for more interdisciplinary research with respect to rural space.

One of the tantalizing questions in the study of the premodern world results from the tensions between, on the one hand, public art and literature, reflecting the official positions by the Church and the aristocracy in its political function, and the great likelihood on the other, that the audience from that time, both noble and members of the lower classes, certainly must have felt considerable enjoyment about the beauty of nature. Aesthetics cannot be simply denied just because the public art at a certain time followed specific directives, being commissioned by Church patrons, above all.

In her contribution to this volume, Lia B. Ross, attempts to overcome that conflict by contrasting the attitude toward nature by the Romantics with the concept of nature as manifested by late-medieval art. Contemporary literature, as expressive and sentimental it might have been at times, continued to follow mostly standard models of how to describe the aesthetic aspect of the rural space, replicating the tropes and topoi as inherited from classical antiquity. Of course, we begin to discover remarkable exceptions here and there, especially if we think of the poetic works by Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) or some fifteenth-century poems in the English language, such as Sir T. Clanvowe's "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" (ca. 1403) or the anonymous "The Flower and the Leaf" (second half of the fifteenth century).³⁵³ Overall, however, late-medieval lyric, despite a host of rhetorical, stylistic, and linguistic innovations, continued the various traditions. Nevertheless, looking at late-medieval art, especially book illustrations, Ross observes a remarkable innovative trend, especially if we consider miniature art, that is, *Book of Hours* and other genres.

While I myself discuss this genre at length with a focus on the rural elements contained in the illustrations, Ross turns to these little but highly valuable books of private devotion because they reflected in many different ways the tastes, interests, and concerns of their patrons. The artists had to pay close attention to their demands, although they also, or just for that reason, followed standard models of how to depict rural scenes and settings.

The *Books of Hours* were created primarily in northern France, in Flanders, in northwestern Germany, and in England, and they followed, in majority, similar ideals and concepts of how natural spaces were to be represented. While I myself

³⁵³ H. S. Bennett, *Chaucer the the Fifteenth Century*. The Oxford History of English Literature, II (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1947/1948), 124–37; see also *Middle English Lyrics: Authoritative Texts, Critical and Historical Backgrounds, Perspectives on Six Poems*, selected and ed. by Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1974), 147–69.

discuss the significant elements in the calendar pictures, Ross explores more poignantly the background history of major representatives, and only then turns to the critical analysis of the rural world as depicted in the miniatures for the calendar sections. She also pays extraordinary attention to the use of colors, shapes, and motifs determining each illumination.

Considering the large number of *Books of Hours* produced during the late Middle Ages, it does not come as a surprise that repetition of specific modes of painting those natural backgrounds and frameworks quickly set in. However, this did not diminish the impressive delight in glowing colors and in minute details borrowed from daily life on a farm or in the countryside. Irrespective of the quickly developing trend to follow the models created by the early masters, especially the Brothers of Limbourg, Ross emphasizes the high degree of sensitivity which the artists had developed, since they consistently succeeded in combining biblical scenes with increasingly realistic settings, as idyllic as they often seem to be—in this sense the difference between the medieval sensibility and the Romantic enthusiasm about wild, often ferocious, sometimes enigmatic and fearful, if not ominous nature could not be bigger.

The difference in Renaissance paintings commonly proves to be the different structure of the many natural elements packed into those illuminations where a variety of activities can take place at the same time, with little to help the viewer to concentrate on the central biblical events in the foreground, or on the specific messages concerning typical occurrences during the course of a year, a phenomenon which could be called 'enumeration.'

The delight in natural elements and the compilation of naturalistic elements also come to the fore in so-called 'princely books,' such as René of Anjou's *Livre du Cœur d'amour épris* from 1457, which contain an abundance of outdoor scenes with a wealth of realistic elements, and this despite the explicitly allegorical nature of this genre. Bizarre elements also occupy the scenes, which reflect the profound attempt to integrate as much of this material world into the ideal concepts which the narratives try to develop. In the history of art Hieronymus Bosch's famous "Garden of Earthly Delights" from ca 1490 to 1510 (today housed in the Museo del Prado in Madrid since 1939) continued this tradition, strongly determined by a realistic framework, and yet deeply informed by extensive allegorization, containing extensive moral warnings and also reflections about paradise lost. Bosch projected rural space, and yet it seems to be more an allegorical garden setting than anything else.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Research on this famous triptych is legion, but see, most recently, Peter Glum, *The Key to Bosch's "Garden of Earthly Delights" Found in Allegorical Bible Interpretation*. Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chi-koron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2007).

Many other north European artists, such as famous Jan van Eyck (ca. 1395–ca. 1440), also worked in that direction, revealing a great delight in rural space for their pictorial backgrounds, without abandoning their fundamental concern to convey religious messages by way of allegorical means. An excellent example proves to be his Ghent altarpiece from 1432, “The Adoration of the Magic Lamb” (in Saint Bavo Cathedral).

Wherever we turn our attention, we notice the growing interest in the natural environment, although the artists tended to depict mostly garden-like settings, and left out the wild, unfamiliar, dangerous, or life-threatening forest. A contemporary account in the *Chroniques* of Georges Chastellain about an unfortunate adventure by Philip the Good (r.1419–1467) who one night got lost in the forest and badly suffered in the underbrush, the rain, and the cold. Finally he found refuge in a peasant’s cottage, and the next morning he managed to return home. The chronicler reflected in most dramatic terms the terror and fear which the lonely duke had to undergo, and subsequently emphasized the tremendous relief for the duke when he was back in his familiar territory, the garden, or park surrounding his residence.

The parallels to the wild forest in courtly literature (see above) are evident, but whereas the Arthurian knight voluntarily enters the forest to meet his challenge, from where he then hopefully manages to return to the court triumphantly (see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with its wonderful description of the Green Chapel), Philip presented himself as completely lost, near desperation, if not death. Significantly, in this account the poor peasant emerges as the duke’s rescuer, similar to the traditional magical guardian figures that commonly keep watch over medieval protagonists, such as the fairy figure Melusine in Thüring von Ringoltingen’s eponymous prose novel, *Melusine* (1456) or in his sources by Couldrette and Jean d’Arras.³⁵⁵ We have already observed the parallel case of a guardian peasant helping a noble lady in Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken’s *Königin Sibile*, while in Chastellain’s chronicle the peasant simply provides shelter for one night.

Lia Ross’s critical conclusion underscores, however, much more the clear demarcation line between the untamed, deeply disliked and ferocious forest and the pleasant, delightful, tamed, and completely controlled garden or park set-up and managed for the nobles in the late Middle Ages and beyond, as we have learned in the contributions by Marilyn Sandidge and Abigail Dowling. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries aristocratic culture by far preferred tamed nature, which

³⁵⁵ Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch* (see note 249), 141–62; cf. now also the contributions to *Eulenspiegel trifft Melusine: der frühneuhochdeutsche Prosaroman im Licht neuer Forschungen und Methoden ; Akten der Lausanner Tagung vom 2. bis 4. Oktober 2008*, ed. Catherine Dittenbass and André Schnyder, with Alexander Schwarz. Chloe, 42 (Amsterdam and New York: Edition Rodopi, 2010).

was the launching pad, so to speak, for a whole-sale development of royal or aristocratic palaces with large grounds around them. Once the wild was controlled, it gained in aesthetic qualities. Wild nature for its own sake, as observed by the Conquistadores in the New World, did not inhere pleasing characteristics. Nevertheless, despite this rather negative conclusion, both Ross's article and my own on the *Books of Hours* underline the tremendous transformation in the attitude toward rural space at the latest by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Ecocritical approaches prove to be, and here as well, highly productive in unraveling many of the mysteries of late-medieval and early-modern art.³⁵⁶

However, we would misread the available evidence if we determined that the focus on rural space became sharpened and intensified only in the late Middle Ages. As we have seen above, already in the early Middle Ages did artists and writers reflect on the natural environment and accepted the impact of natural features on the development of individuals in fictional or factual terms. An excellent example proves to be the Middle English romance *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, which Jean E. Jost discusses in her contribution as a powerful illustration of how much medieval protagonists moved between the rural and the urban/courtly space and needed both dimensions to do justice to the demands on them in their maturation process. As the author signalled through the complex arrangement of the narrative, the move from court to the forest, from the marsh to the city, etc., allowed him (her?) to explore the contrastive elements of the magical and the natural, of the wild and the civilized, all essential components in human existence, whether resulting from imagination or reflecting historical reality. In *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* we are quickly confronted by a marshy, bog-like terrain, Turnewathelane, which almost evokes the dark rural spaces in the heroic epic *Beowulf*.

As Jost observes, the rural space is not simply a uniform world, but is presented in multiple degrees of rurality, more or less removed from the world of the court. Often courtly authors enjoyed exploring the meaning of fairies, magic, and fantasy creatures who live in a land where the standard human conditions no longer are at work. This is the case in this Middle English romance as well. The lovers seek a quiet resting place, but suddenly face a radical change of weather and then a skeleton ghost, challenging them in multiple fashions. Having been a queen herself, Gaynour's mother seeks help from her daughter, but she can only ask her

³⁵⁶ Fletcher, *Gardens of Earthly Delight* (see note 323). For a detailed review, overall positive, see David Scott-Macnab in *The Medieval Review* (online) 12.1.02. He rightly warns us, however, of a number of errors resulting from Fletcher's heavy reliance on secondary sources, so especially with respect to Gaston Phébus's hunting book and the way how he died. But Fletcher brings many years of personal experience to this book, which allows him to discuss an impressive range of biological aspects most medievalists would not be familiar with.

for this support in the gloomy space far away from civilization; it is almost a hellish scenario projected here. Forced into empathy and pity, Gaynour is granted the opportunity to look into a metaphysical mirror by staring at her ghostly mother, and thereby learns how to lead a better life determined by religious ideals. Similarly, her companion Sir Gawayne is forewarned of the doom of King Arthur and his court, and so also profits from the apparition in this lonely rural space, which teaches him to change his life and to keep the vagaries of fortune in mind.

As in a very similar, ominous and prophetic scene in the *Nibelungenlied*, where the water nixies tell Hagen about the future destiny of the entire Burgundian army during their visit at King Etzel's court (see above), here the macabre encounter with the ghost carries prophetic implications, and here as well the epistemological framework is given by wild, uncanny rural space, such as the marsh.

The problematic confrontations in *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* do not come to an end; instead, as Jost emphasizes, they continue in the following sections of the narrative, although then in a reversed order, strangely emerging from the wilderness and entering King Arthur's court. The civilized and the uncivilized prove to be intimately intertwined insofar as both human society and the wild respond to each other, challenging the respective other, and exposing weaknesses and fear. But the military contest between Gawayne and Geleron avoids large-scale violence and military operations because, as we might say, the distance between the rural and the courtly world has shrunk remarkably. At the end, as Jost emphasizes, the external and the internal dimensions are reunited, and the harmony at court is reestablished because contrastive spaces have been merged in metaphorical terms.

Both on an abstract and on a literal level do we recognize the great significance of rural space for courtly audiences, whether it constituted a fundamental challenge, such as in The Stricker's Middle High German Arthurian romance, *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal* (ca. 1210–1225), with its giants, monsters, devilish figures, mountain passes, and the ominous Old Man of the Mountain,³⁵⁷ or in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, not to mention *Awntyrs off Arthure*.

³⁵⁷ Der Stricker, *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal*, ed. Michael Resler. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 92 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1983); Der Stricker, *Daniel of the Blossoming Valley*, trans. Michael Resler. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series B, 58 (New York and London: Garland, 1999); Albrecht Classen, "'Detail-Realismus' im deutschen Spätmittelalter: Der Fall von des Strickers *Daniel von dem blühen Tal* und Konrads von Würzburg *Turnier von Nantes*," *Studia Neophilologica* 64 (1992): 195–220; Markus Wennerhold, *Späte mittelhochdeutsche Artusromane: "Lanzelet", "Wigalois", "Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal", "Diu Crône": Bilanz der Forschung 1960–2000*. Würzburger Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 27 (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 128–81.

Once we acknowledge the relevance of space, as a result of the 'spatial turn' (see above), we recognize increasingly, as Jost does in her contribution, the enormous significance of contrastive, often contradictory projections of space, rural and courtly, urban and ecclesiastical. Subsequently we could go so far as to determine the central importance of rural space, above all, insofar as here the transformation of the courtly protagonists tend to take place, whereupon they are enabled to return to their previous position, now matured and enlightened, if this is not too big of a word in this context, through the confrontation with the rural at large.

Throughout the Middle Ages we discover two major strands of discourse, the one mocking and satirizing peasants at large, while the other, much less common, yet still present, reflects a certain respect for the worthy and deeply grounded peasant, the last representative of traditional values and honors.³⁵⁸ But at times the situation in late-medieval literature is not as straightforward, as Nicolino Applauso illustrates through a careful and detailed reading of a rather unique and heretofore little discussed poem, Matazone da Caligano's "Nativitas rusticorum" from the thirteenth or perhaps late fourteenth century. Matazone presents himself as a kind of jester who was a peasant, and as such born from a donkey's fart—all hilarious and deeply satirical, and as in many similar cases containing a reflection on peasants in the late Middle Ages, especially because he denounces the abuse from which the peasants have to suffer and ridicules the peasants at the same time. The Italian phrase 'satira del villano' could mean both 'satire of the peasant' and 'satire by the peasant about the tradition of literary mockery of peasants.'

But the negative approach to peasants dominated throughout the entire age, as even Dante confirmed with a sarcastic comment about peasants in his *Divina commedia*. As Applauso points out, however, a more careful examination of the manuscript documents can reveal the other tradition, such as the "Ritmo Laurenziano" (ca. 1188–1207) with its rather mixed treatment of rustics who are suddenly not all that bad, ignorant, or simply boorish. Other texts, such as poems by the thirteenth-century Guittone d'Arezzo, rely on peasant imageries not to ridicule those very persons, but to attack in a mocking fashion high ranking

³⁵⁸ This finds its probably best expression in the tensions between father and son in Wernher the Gardener's Middle High German *Meier Helmbrecht* from ca. 1250–1280. See my discussion of this remarkable didactic verse narrative above. We would also have to consider the testimony of Pieter Brueghel the Elder's extraordinary rural scenes in his wonderfully realistic paintings, as I have discussed above. Sharon King, in her contribution to this volume, reaches a similar conclusion in her investigation of late-medieval French *farce*, where she discovers a wide range of character portrayals involving both nobles and peasants, burghers and clerics. Laughter evoked through literary texts reveals how much human folly is not limited to any specific class, gender, age, or race, although medieval and early-modern writers and poets found it normally easier to project the foolish peasant, the standard scapegoat for all kinds of shortcomings.

individuals or other contemporaries. The same observation applies to sixteenth-century Shrovetide plays by Hans Sachs (1494–1576), as I have discussed above.

Some poets such as Cecco Angiolieri deliberately resorted to terms evoking the rural population in order to characterize their own poetry, revealing the extent to which the peasant class was not necessarily categorized simply in one way or the other. The fourteenth-century jester-poet Cenne della Chitarra satirically portrayed the knightly world and humorously idealized peasant culture, and he was followed by numerous others, which clearly underscores, as Applauso emphasizes, the strong availability of both traditions of hating and supporting the peasantry. This provides then the ideal framework for his in-depth analysis of Matazone's poem at the same time, which easily proves to be a comic composition with many types of criticism against various social groups and individuals concomitantly. In the exchange between lord and peasant, the former's hypocrisy and violent handling of his subjects in the countryside becomes quite clear, especially if we consider the fundamental changes in the social legislation in thirteenth-century Italy, granting the peasant population considerably more freedom and justice.

Nevertheless, and this makes the entire condition of Matazone's work so fascinating, the contradictions in the evaluation of the peasant class are rather obvious, since the poet plays both with traditions of mockery and the concept of supporting peasants. Satire and sarcasm, however, remain the main *modi operandi*. Since Matazone functions as a jester, he deliberately utilizes ambivalence in his approach to the peasant and to the knight, and makes fun of both social classes, a phenomenon which finds full confirmation not much later in early-modern German satirical literature, especially in the anonymous *Till Eulenspiegel* (1515; see above) and in jest narratives (*Schwänke*).

The employment of hyperbole, the address of a rather mixed audience, and the excessive sarcasm indicate, as Applauso reads it, a not too subtle undermining of the usual peasant mockery, expanding the poem's major thrust to criticize in a facetious manner all people, although the peasants serve as stand-ins to blunt the criticism and to allow the audience to laugh actually about their own shortcomings. Applauso concludes his paper by referring to the play *Mistero Buffo* (1969) by the famous winner of the Noble prize for literature, Dario Fo, where this specific interpretation, highlighting the satirical nature and global purpose of Matazone's poem comes to the fore in full force.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ In 1996, Dario Fo dedicated an entire play to the topic of peasants with his *La Bibbia dei villani* that was inspired by the biblical and medieval cultural traditions. The play was translated into English in 2004; see Dario Fo, *The Peasants' Bible and the Story of the Tiger*, trans. Ron Jenkins (New York: Grove Press, 2004). A revised and enlarged edition of this play has been recently published in Italy; see Dario Fo and Franca Rame, *La Bibbia dei villani*. Narratori della Fenice (Parma: Guanda, 2010). I thank Nicolino Applauso for this information.

Insofar as Matazone certainly operated as a jester, and aimed for social criticism veiled in almost too plump and direct criticism of peasants, we might be able to uncover, as Applauso suggests, the other tradition in which members of the rustic class were supported and defended, even when the poets invited the audience to laugh about them.³⁶⁰

While Sherri Olson in her contribution to this volume examines the conditions in medieval village life at large, Birgit Wiedl contributes a detailed study about what we know so far about medieval Jews living in the Austrian countryside. Whereas we normally, and rightly so, assume that most European Jews preferred to settle in urban centers because there they found all the protection normally available to them (if at all), and could rely on the required institutions relevant for Jewish life and culture, Wiedl can also refer to a surprisingly large number of cases with Jews documented in rural communities. The sources, however, tend to be problematic because they are often not conclusive enough. Some individuals might have been travelers or merchants, others might have a rural and an urban residence at the same time, depending on their business dealings, and some might have lived in a village only temporarily. In western Europe from the eighth century on, Jews are reported of as having been landowners, especially in the Provence and in central and eastern France, while they hardly ever emerge as landowners in northern France and in the Holy Roman Empire, as Michael Toch now informs us,³⁶¹ and as Wiedl underscores of Austria as well.

Nevertheless, by the mid-thirteenth century we notice the first development of permanent Jewish settlements in rural communities in Austria, as problematic as those might have been for the newcomers. After all, as Wiedl emphasizes, in the villages Jews often had to share a house with Christian neighbors; they did not have available a Jewish cemetery, a synagogue, or a mikvah, not to mention kosher meat which they then had to create themselves by doing home-butchery. Again, however, apart from documents reflecting business transactions between Christians and Jews, it proves to be very difficult to discover more explicit comments about Jewish settlements in rural areas, as much as they are documented quite often. But we can be certain that those Jews who appear in the relevant sources were not necessarily of a lower social class and of reduced financial means, quite on the contrary. The sources tell us mostly about business transactions when they involved larger amounts of money given as credit or as

³⁶⁰ See also Yona Pinson, *The Fool's Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

³⁶¹ Michael Toch, "Ein ungelöstes Kapitel in der Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Juden: Landbesitz vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert," *Christliches und jüdisches Europa im Mittelalter: Kolloquium zu Ehren von Alfred Haverkamp*, ed. Lukas Clemens and Sigrid Hirbodian, ed. staff Miriam Weiss (Trier: Kliomedica, 2011), 189–96.

payment of the loan, involving mostly monasteries, high-ranking noble families, and the territorial duke himself. Local, hence smaller credits for farmers, by contrast, were probably dealt with in an oral process and commonly did not leave any traces in the archives.

When Jews settled in rural communities, they never arrived in large numbers; in fact, we are normally presented with just one or two families, if not only individuals. Contrary to common assumptions, Jews could fairly easily become landowners, especially of vineyards, which they acquired as a form of remission of debt, or owned in order to produce kosher wine for their own consumption at Jewish religious feasts and rituals. Otherwise, however, we can hardly trace any agricultural activities by Jews in late-medieval Austria, or at least as far as we can tell on the basis of current documentation in the archives.³⁶²

Consequently, as Wiedl underscores, whereas Jewish pogroms normally originated in cities, in the southeastern part of Europe the situation was rather the opposite, with violence and persecutions directed against Jews starting in those very rural communities where only few Jews were living. Close neighborhood coexistence did nothing to prevent stereotypes and large-scale brutality by Christians against Jews—a phenomenon which finds sad parallels in modern times as well, if we think of the parallel case in modern-day Kosovo where the war broke out in 1998 and lasted until 1999, bringing uncountable suffering especially for the civilian population in the rural areas.³⁶³

The documentation for this wide-spread violence against Jews having settled in the Austrian countryside confirms, at least indirectly, in how many villages Jews actually lived, and how much propaganda about the alleged ritual murder or the host desecration could affect the Christian rural population, inciting them to murderous actions against their own neighbors.

In this light the presentation of the village population in the famous allegorical verse narrative *Der Ring* by the Constance public notary Heinrich Wittenwiler (ca. 1400), which I have discussed above, might illustrate the actual conditions in Austrian villages during the late Middle Ages much more in concrete terms than

³⁶² Toch, “Ein ungelöstes Kapitel” (see note 361), 195–96, confirms this observation for most of early-medieval southern and western Europe. See also the contributions to *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Juden: Fragen und Einschätzungen*, ed. Michael Toch. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, 71 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008). His new monograph, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der europäischen Juden im Mittelalter*, vol. 1: *Das Frühmittelalter*, is forthcoming.

³⁶³ For a detailed summary of that horrible war, see Mark Webber, *The War Over Kosovo : Ten Years On*. International Affairs, 85, 2009, 3 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009); Armend R. Bekaj, *The KLA and the Kosovo War: From Intra-State Conflict to Independent Country*. Berghof Transitions Series, 8 (Berlin: Berghof-Stiftung für Konfliktforschung, 2010); as to the political myths and ideologies as root causes of the war, see Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); cf. also the excellent article in *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_War (last accessed on Jan. 11, 2012).

we might have thought possible, especially with respect to the people's simple willingness to unleash raw violence against anyone whom they suddenly disliked for no rational reasons, simply out of religious fanaticism or economic hardship. The cases of pogroms against the Jews in Korneuburg in 1305 and then especially in Pulkau in 1338 confirm this observation very tragically. Subsequently, Jewish settlement in most rural communities disappeared for a long time, though those still occurred indeed, as Eveline Brugger points out in her contribution to this volume (see my summary below). Nevertheless, Jews then mostly moved to cities where they found more protection and support among the Jewish communities, although they were not safe there either, as the pogrom and expulsion in 1420–1421 indicate only too drastically, especially because the ducal protection had already begun to wane noticeably by the time of Rudolph IV's rule (1358–1365). After all, he and his successors were basically only interested in the financial exploitation of the Jewish population, urban or rural. When Jews returned to the Austrian territories in the sixteenth centuries, the conditions there had changed considerably.

To return to the same issue, but from a slightly different perspective, throughout the Middle Ages Jewish communities were closely linked with each other all over Europe. In fact, it would be appropriate to talk about a close-knit network of individuals over a wide range of lands. The situation in Austria was just the same, as Eveline Brugger observes in her contribution to this volume, in which, however, she focuses above all, in contrast to the paper by Birgit Wiedl, on the curious phenomenon of one of the most influential and wealthiest Jewish moneylenders, Hetschel (Chaim) of Herzogenburg, living in the countryside, while normally Jewish communities were settled in the cities. He belonged to a very successful family with many members having achieved high reputation as rabbis and having accumulated considerable wealth.

Herzogenburg is located ca. 60 km west of Vienna and has always been a rather rural location. We cannot really tell why Hetschel, probably the second most influential Jewish moneylender in the duchy of Austria after David Steuss of Vienna, moved there from Krems, but the reason was certainly not that he simply enjoyed the peacefulness and tranquility of the countryside, although there was no established Jewish community or support system for him. This would be an anachronistic reading and blind us to the concrete financial and political pressures exerted by the Dukes Albrecht III and Leopold III on the Jewish population at large, but in the cities especially, that he wanted to escape from.

Since he soon controlled such a strong financial business and exerted such extensive influence everywhere, especially among the highest ranks of society, those who needed loans would come to him if necessary, although he also traveled extensively to conduct his business dealings. He enjoyed comparatively secure

conditions, not uncommon for Jews in Austria during the third quarter of the fourteenth century, that is, between ca. 1369 and 1392. Hetschel regularly maintained close connections with the larger Jewish community in Krems, only ca. 20 km distance to Herzogenburg, but he never indicated any interest in joining them again, and preferred the rather isolated location of his own residence. After all, he maintained excellent business dealings with entire communities both within Austria and outside, and also with members of the Christian nobility. This might have facilitated his personal choice since the rural town did not have any noticeable impact on his business, while the social conditions were relaxed enough at that time for him to live at least temporarily at that remote location.

Brugger outlines a number of possible reasons for Hetschel's move, either to escape increasing ducal efforts to extort huge amounts of money from the Jews, or to follow the footsteps of a relative, David of Herzogenburg. Several other Jews followed him there, but a really important Jewish community never developed in that little town. To be sure, Hetschel continued to be an extraordinary exception, living so far away and mostly by himself, but he obviously had understood that this rural community provided him with more protection to carry out his business than the cities of Krems or Vienna.³⁶⁴

As we have now seen a number of times, the rural world was not always in direct conflict with the aristocracy and the urban class. In fact, we would suffer from a myopic, ideological viewpoint if we considered the countless satirical and sarcastic comments about peasants in the Middle Ages and the early modern age as expressions of utter contempt and rejection. After all, the farmers continued to be those who produced all essential food, so they were, altogether, most critical for the survival and well-being of society. At the same time, we hear of a number of peasant uprisings and war from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Scott L. Taylor here takes those in closer view in order to reflect on the impact which legal changes had on the living conditions of premodern farmers. As he observes from the start, most of the peasant revolts were tied in with suddenly raised additional requirements from their lords, secular and clerical, who had instituted new laws justifying those extra burdens and fees in order to meet their own demands and costs of changed lifestyles at court and in the late-medieval economy.

Basically, as Taylor emphasizes, we observe critical clashes between *usos rerum rusticarum* and *malae consuetudines* to pay, for instance, for newly established standing armies, garrisons, weapons, and the like. But a more critical aspect might be the dramatic changes resulting from the drastic decline in population since the

³⁶⁴ The rural economy in the Middle Ages is currently attracting more attention, see Hannes Obermair and Volker Stamm, *Zur Ökonomie einer ländlichen Pfarrgemeinde* (see note 7). But much still needs to be done in that area.

Black Death, which ultimately threatened the manorial management because of a lack of laborers available. The nobles all over Europe tried various strategies to compensate for the disappearance of their traditional work force either by granting more freedoms to the farmers on their estates or by imposing stricter rules demanding higher amounts of feudal commitments in the form of service and rent. Surprisingly, at least in late fourteenth-century England, the courts became a central battleground for both sides of this equation, insofar as even the rural tenants and free farmers resorted to legal means, collecting money to hire lawyers for their case, and suing their lords.

Ironically, in the subsequent years lawyers became the target of much public criticism, since they were accused of serving as catalysts for major social conflicts. Another disturbing factor was the ever growing poll tax, which the farmers regarded as a direct attack against their well-being, especially because they accused the representatives of the shires of having failed in protecting them adequately from an imbalanced and highly burdensome taxation system. Religious unrest furthered the political turmoil and then led to actual riots (Lollardism).

The situation in late-medieval Germany was similar and yet different, considering the causes of the Peasants' War in 1524–1525. On the one hand a long-term agricultural crisis deeply affected the rural conditions for many decades, leading to the disintegration of manors, the divvying up of communal property for farm use, and hence to an increase in legal wrangling over land rights. In 1495, Emperor Maximilian I established the *Reichskammergericht*, an imperial court, which was to be staffed at least to fifty percent by university-trained judges. Consequently, many lower-level courts sprang up all over Germany, which meant the steady replacement of the customary Germanic law, as expressed, for instance, by Eike von Repgow's *Sachsenspiegel* (a. 1235),³⁶⁵ with Roman law. While English peasants sought refuge with the courts and utilized the laws to their advantage, the German peasants bitterly complained about the new laws and new courts that undermined their traditional legal positions insofar as they supported the princes' efforts to raise higher taxes. This is not to deny the influence which the Protestant Reformation might have had on the peasants' uprising, as is explicitly expressed by the *Twelve Articles of Memmingen*, published in March 1525.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Maria Dobozy. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). As she emphasizes, in clear contrast to Roman Law, "the *Sachsenspiegel* was built upon the interrelatedness of language, religion, literature, morality, and aesthetics, [and] for this reason, it re-created then as it does now the very structure of society" (1).

³⁶⁶ Stayer, "The German Peasants' War" (see note 214), 130–35; see also the contributions to *Reformation und Bauernkrieg: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik im geteilten Deutschland*, ed. Jan Scheunemann. Schriften der Stiftung der Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt, 11 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt, 2010). Peter Blickle, *Der Bauernkrieg: die Revolution des Gemeinen Mannes*. 4th rev. ed. Beck'sche Reihe, 2103. Beck Wissen (Munich: Beck, 2012).

As Taylor concludes, social conflicts have commonly much to do with changes in the legal system, which, however, social historians tend to overlook, arguing only from an economic and political perspective. In this regard the uprising of the English peasantry in 1378 was mostly solved by means of the courts which in a way supported the rural claimants, while the German Peasants' War ca. one hundred-fifty years later reflected a deep divide between the rural population and the new legal system aiding mostly the aristocracy and the royalty. The constant deterioration of the peasant class in the subsequent centuries, especially during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), reflected the increasing power of the courts and the modern legal system.

As is commonly the case in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, social issues, tensions, conflicts, and problems were addressed in the form of comedy. Laughing about a social opponent, or a member of a lower social class, has traditionally been a strategic operation in literature and in public, as we have seen already numerous times above (*fabliaux*, *mæren*, *novelle*, and numerous visual objects, such as in the *Books of Hours*). We have also learned especially from Nicolino Applauso's contribution how much the discourse on peasants or members of the rural population regularly displayed a strong dichotomy, either mostly ridiculing or rejecting farmers at large, or presenting them as the foundation of all of society because they produced all food.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth century numerous French authors of *farce*, a short dramatic piece, enjoyed working with these two aspects, presenting hideous or glorifying images of the peasant on the stage, a strategy that we can also observe within the world of early-modern German *Shrovetide Plays* (Hans Sachs et al.). Sharon King, in her contribution to this volume, turns her attention to the many rural figures on the stage within the genre of the *farce*, and illustrates how much they parade in front of the viewer as representatives of the whole gamut of human frailties and shortcomings in moral, ethical, but then also in economic, religious, and criminal terms. There are homeless individuals, vagrants, thieves, deceivers, hawkers, but mostly true farmers who are presented in their profession, whether they are cuckolded or not, commit crimes or not. Gullibility is one of the major character traits, closely followed by ignorance and stupidity, especially when the events turn to smart priests who succeed in sleeping with the farmer's wife.

One of the most dramatic examples of the social and literary function of the *farce* and its use of the peasant figure can be found in Pierre Gringoire's 1512 carnival play *Raoullet Ployart* where the target of mocking ridicule proves to be the farmer's sexual impotence, which makes his wife look for an alternative to this predicament in her life. Sexual comedy has always been one of the favorite themes in world

literature, and so also in the Middle Ages and the early modern age.³⁶⁷ Staging sexual travesty on the stage with the protagonists hailing from the urban community was probably one strategy, but resorting to cuckolded or foolish male peasant figures always emerged as the preferred *modus operandi*, although this did not essentially change the actual target of the satire, human foolishness.

Dupery and skillful rhetorical strategies regularly function as the central operatives to entertain the audience with sexual allusions to the rural world. But King also emphasizes that many times the peasant figures demonstrate a considerable degree of cunning, wit, and communicative skills which help them to get out of a dilemma with their lords, or with the law. In addition, many stereotypical conflicts between the genders are fought out in these farces, situating them, once again, in a rural setting, probably because it was easier to do so, avoiding feelings of insult and hurt among the urban audience, although they were just as guilty of those failings, stupid acts, ignorance, and impotence.

Of course, many times the village bumpkins visit the city to sell their wares on the market, and then are easily duped and deceived by city con-men, yet there are also occasions where the poor peasant gets even and triumphs over his city opponents, which gives rise to more laughter. As an aside, this is actually often expressed in fable literature, whether we think of Aesop or Marie de France, Jean de La Fontaine or Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, especially with regard to the account about the city mouse and the country mouse. As much as the former tries to convince the latter that urban existence trumps life in the countryside, for the latter there are just too many dangers for her, while the city mouse easily copes with them and enjoys all the advantages available to her in the burgher's house. As Marie concludes her tale, "This fable teaches us a lesson: / Each one prefers his small possessions, / Which he enjoys in tranquil pleasure, / To anxious woes of others' treasure" (52–56).³⁶⁸

As the evidence of the *farce* indicates, the boundaries between city and country were not as clear-cut as we might think, not even in the early modern age, although the farmer visiting the city within the literary context commonly reacts with great surprise and astonishment about the fanciful cityscape and the built-up interior, not to mention the market conditions. Innocent village women are strongly contrasted with lecherous noblemen and burghers, which evokes the other tradition which I have discussed above, represented by the famous Griselda

³⁶⁷ Albrecht Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter* (see note 124). Astoundingly, the monograph by Jean Verdon, *Irdische Lust: Liebe, Sex und Sinnlichkeit im Mittelalter*, trans. from the French [into German] by Gaby Sonnabend (2006; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), lacks mostly in scholarly rigor and barely moves beyond a patchwork of quick references and discussions intended only to entertain a general audience.

³⁶⁸ Marie de France, *Fables*, ed. and trans. by Harriet Spiegel. Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 55.

figure. Most significantly, the *farce* authors did not hold back in criticizing and ridiculing everyone, including members of the clergy and the aristocracy, though they obviously preferred to target the peasants as their easiest victims. Nevertheless, as King alerts us repeatedly, we also find *farces* where the farmer/miller gets the better end in the clash with catty gentlemen and even cuckold them in their own presence because he demonstrates his intellectual superiority.

A good third of all known *farces* are rooted in the rural world and allow us to get intriguing insight into the living conditions among the peasant population, though they do have constant contact with members of the other social classes. Although the authors tended to portray their peasant characters as ignorant, foolish, if not as imbeciles, they do not hesitate to go the very opposite direction and present rather wily, cunning, intelligent, and witty figures. After all, the basic intention was not to perpetuate specific prejudice, or to embark on a social critique of the lower classes. The *farce* authors wanted to make their audiences laugh, and they resorted to every possible theme, motif, *Stoff*, strategy, and character portrayal to achieve that goal. In this sense the *farces* prove to be highly valuable source material to comprehend the highly diverse conditions in the rural world, at least in late-medieval and early-modern France.³⁶⁹

On a side note, but reconfirming this observation, early modern playwrights in London frequently contrasted rural space with a sophisticated urban cityscape, often mocking rural society and its denizens but occasionally presenting a forest or pasture in a favorable light. In Jacobean and Restoration plays, such as William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* and William Congreve's *The Way of the World*, rural characters who make their way to the city are mocked and duped at every turn. Often in Shakespeare's comedies and romances, though, rural space in plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* offers characters a place to regenerate, explore self-identity, and shed pretension. The term "country" also, however, takes on sexual connotations in Shakespeare and elsewhere at this time. Hamlet, for example, asks Ophelia if she thinks he meant "country matters," meaning sexual relations, when he wants to put his head in her lap (3.2.1997). Again, the scholarship on these topics is extensive.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ George Huppert, *After the Black Death* (see note 245), 67–79; see also James Richard Farr, *The Work of France: Labor and Culture in Early Modern Times, 1350 - 1800*. Critical Issues in World and International History (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). As to the economic development of the rural world, see Philip T. Hoffman, *Growth in a Traditional Society: The French Countryside, 1450–1815*. The Princeton Economic History of the Western World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³⁷⁰ See, for instance, David Young, *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972); *Shakespeare's Histories and Counter-Histories*, ed. Dermot Cavanagh, Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Stephen Longstaffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). The scholarship on this topic is legion.

Romance writers continued to work on the dialectics of rural and courtly space, on the tension between the forest and the city, and on the protagonist's suffering in the wild and his/her recovery through various means and strategies which allows him/her to return to the court. This is brilliantly illustrated by Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, an incredibly sophisticated and hilarious mock narrative about a courtly hero, the mad Orlando. Elizabeth Chesney Zegura analyzes this text in light of what rural space means for the development of the main protagonist. As much as Ariosto projected as ideal the various urban and courtly spaces, he also has the protagonist roam the wilderness in his extraordinary madness in which he ravages nature and kills peasants at whim. At the same time, leaving aside numerous biblical allusions, the novel contains most impressive descriptions of cityscapes in specific contrast to the wild nature beyond the city walls.

As Zegura observes, the poet vacillates repeatedly and most curiously between an idealized projection of an arcadian past and a realistic reference to life within the city, safely removed from the rural, or agrarian world. However, for Orlando wild nature serves particularly well to ventilate his profound passions, anger, frustration, and desperation regarding his seemingly failed love relationship. Very similar to Yvain/Iwein in the eponymous romance by Chrétien de Troyes and Hartmann von Aue respectively, the realization that his love was spurned forces Orlando completely back into the bosom of nature, shedding all human and civilizational vestiges, including his armor and clothing, and roaming the wilderness, exerting his enormous strength violently against trees, caves, peasants, and other elements or people of the rural world, virtually returning to the original stage of man, in Paradise, although this all appears to be a form of satire of the biblical text because of the destructive approach.

In particular, this new 'Adam' turns most violently against nature and the rural population, taking out his frustration and desperation on innocent objects and people. Zegura emphasizes that this could be read as Ariosto's strongest form of criticism against war at large, and against violent behavior in any form as it might appear, not exempting even members of the higher aristocracy. There is little that would prevent us from reading these scenes or character profiles as specific expressions criticizing the consequences of war and of all military conflicts, not uncommon among early-modern humanists, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536).³⁷¹ We observe, especially, concrete disapproval of the way aristocrats

³⁷¹ See now the contributions to *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 8 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011). Zeguras's comments on this issue would have been valuable contributions to this volume, especially because none of the authors there discusses Ariosto.

mistreat their peasants, which might be a distant echo of the revolutionary events in Germany during the Peasants' War from 1524–1525.

Although the narrative depicts temporarily images of peaceful, submissive farmers who carry out their work as ordered by God—almost evoking the images created for the purpose of illustrating the countless late-medieval *Books of Hours*³⁷²—the appearance of Orlando, who randomly beheads people, butchers animals, and causes general mayhem undermines the short-lived idyl. He is, in short, a mad vandal, a ravager of his entire environment, social and natural, although he represents, at least formally or traditionally, the highest level of civilization as a member of the aristocracy. In this regard, following Zegura's analysis, we can conclude that the narrator vocalizes severe criticism against the entire concept of heroism, knighthood, and aristocracy because its supreme representative has turned mad and kills who- or whatever comes across his way and randomly destroys objects. The traditional villains are suddenly turned into innocent victims of the aristocratic villain, who has entirely abandoned the traditional concept of defending the weak and helpless as the foundation upon which the legitimacy of the aristocracy rested in the first place. Most dramatically, Orlando turns brutally against the very symbols of peace and innocence, sheep and shepherds, and in this sense might also rage against God Himself. As Zegura suggests, Ariosto might have been familiar enough on a personal level with the poor people's suffering, famine, and misery, and so did not shy away from serving, in some sense, as their spokesperson among the high aristocracy, presenting to us a nearly super-human hero who has turned mad and attacks his own people, those whom he is actually supposed to protect and support as their lord.

Although the narrative at first seems to imply the projection of an arcadian, bucolic scenery, with Orlando having returned to the roots of mankind, of having reentered the Golden Age, the close reading reveals the extent to which he actually undermines all living things, not only uprooting trees, but also eating acorns, making the re-seeding impossible. In fact, from an ecocritical perspective, Orlando turns into the very force that destroys all life. Zegura also underscores how much Ariosto's romance implied broader criticism against the deforestation and the abuse of the natural world in northeastern Italy for military and economic reasons. In fact, in his *Satires* the author propounded the careful handling of all human resources, the capping of wasteful and unnecessary consumption, and argued for a stop of the ravaging of nature out of simple human greed. In this regard we might consider Ariosto a noteworthy and important avatar of ecological thinking, as an attentive and critical observer of the human impact on the natural environment, as much as he was obligated by his princely patrons at the court of

³⁷² See the contributions to this volume by Albrecht Classen and Lia B. Ross.

Ferrara, the Este family, to project an ideal concept of courtliness in his text. However, the romance itself does not end with an apocalyptic projection; instead there is hope for a constructive development within human society and its interaction with the rural space through the happy marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero, ancestors of the Este dynasty.

The idea of the rural, as expressed by the plowman, for instance, could also be utilized in a rhetorical sense, pitting representatives of polar viewpoints about the condition a society was in against each other. William Langland, whom I have discussed above, was an early representative of this trend, when he composed his *Piers Plowman*. Kyle DiRoberto identifies an intriguing, though much more complex continuation of that tradition in sixteenth-century English literature where the Puritans bitterly fought against the Popularists. The terms 'prostitute' and 'plowman' became highly effective rhetorical tools in their campaign to malign the other side of the ideological battle carried out by means of poems and other literary texts. The combatants included the Puritans Gabriel Harvey, Gabriel's brother Richard, and his student Edmund Spenser, and the popular writers Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, John Lyly, and, later, Ben Jonson on the other. When the Puritan Martin Marprelate entered the fray, the exchanges between both sides became even more acrimonious, focusing on how to evaluate the carnivalesque, as feminine (here in explicitly negative terms) or natural of the people's culture. Harvey, above all, claimed that the plowman figure represented the masculine, virtuous voice of the people, while the popular artists appeared to him and his group as effeminizing writers undermining the traditional value of poetry. However, in comparison with many medieval authors, such as Langland or Johannes Tepl, the Puritans did not necessarily endeavor to prop up the peasant as the truly ideal figure in contrast to the courtier or the urban dweller.

DiRoberto demonstrates how much the fierce debate centered on ideological positions concerning the proper literary aesthetics and had little if any real social-political implications. The Puritans resorted to terms such as 'prostitutes' and 'whores' to criticize their opponents, while they themselves metaphorically paraded in the costume of the virile and virtuous peasant. By contrast, the Popularists ridiculed that image of the plowman and presented themselves as closely associated with the grotesque carnivalesque figure as the unbridled and uninhibited element closer to social reality, hence a true expression of popular culture, which they wanted to determine themselves.

However, both sides in that debate only pretended to be really concerned with the people, or the peasant, while in reality, as DiRoberto avers, they all battled for ascendancy at court and hence the improvement of their own social standing as writers and determinants in the cultural battle. In a way, we might say that the representatives of both sides really colonized the rural space for their own

purposes and utilized the plowman or the prostitute as rhetorical weapons only. Nevertheless, they all endeavored to win the competition of creating the true pastoral genre, hence vied for public recognition as authors allegedly giving a voice to the ordinary people, which was, however, far from the truth. At the same time, as DiRoberto emphasizes, as *literati* they were of course all concerned with gaining public approval and rallying the masses behind themselves.

In the course of their cantankerous bickering and hostile arguments, the feminine entered the stage of their exchanges, since the Popularists did not refrain from openly presenting the female body as a good representative of their own values, while the Puritans identified the carnival with the disorderly woman who had to be repressed by rational men like themselves. The Popularists, in turn, advocated the liberation of women, particularly in sexual terms, by way of fully embracing the carnivalesque culture of their time where the libidinous individual could find his/her self-fulfillment in free expression. For the Puritans, the solution consisted of developing a simple, masculine style in speech and thus to resist the evil temptations of the carnival, the domain of the allegedly fraudulent Popularists and their conniving strategies to steal the people from the virtuous Puritans. In this regard, the image of the prostitute served the latter exceedingly well to criticize their opponents, while they hoped to project the pastoral as the critical genre where they could reconstitute true cultural values.

When we turn to the seventeenth century, the topic of rural space has already acquired much in esteem, and many times poets indulged in adulating beautiful nature scenes, such as Robert Herrick (1591–1674).³⁷³ Curiously, however, while he composed many poems dedicated to the attractiveness of nature, he also wrote many poems with the very opposite viewpoint, rejecting the rural as abominable and distasteful, obviously resorting to a dialectical strategy in his treatment of nature. Jessica Tvordi discusses Herrick's perception of the rural as a reflection of his intensive engagement with the classical tradition of the pastoral and the georgic, which he deliberately contrasted with the idealized image of urban space where intellect and culture prospered. Living in the countryside was, as many of Herrick's poems reveal, a form of exile, banished from the center of all society in the big city of London. Only there would he have the opportunity to enjoy conviviality, wit, and poetic community. By contrast, life in the country exposed him to rude treatment by the peasants and their horrifying ignorance—all tropes

³⁷³ Recent research has also emphasized the topic of conviviality in his poems; see the contributions to *"Lords of wine and oile": Community and Conviviality in the Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. Ruth Connoll and Tom Cain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). At the same time, the reception of classical literature on Herrick's work also proves to be of major importance; see Syrithe Pugh, *Herrick, Fanshawe and the Politics of Intertextuality: Classical Literature and Seventeenth-Century Royalism* (Farnham, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

that can be easily traced back to the Middle Ages and antiquity, especially if we think of Ovid's poems about his exile at the Black Sea, the *Tristia*, and his *Epistulae ex Ponto* (written between 9 and 16 C.E.).

At the same time the trend in poetry and literature went just the opposite way, to project pastoral images and to act out dreams of a peaceful, idyllic life in the country.³⁷⁴ To counteract that, Herrick turned to the georgic mode of poetry, focusing on the pragmatic aspects of life in the countryside, aiming for a utilitarian engagement with the land and the animals. It all depends, however, on what poems one looks at because Herrick developed many in which he adulates the rural and portrays nature as an ideal that could be enjoyed and profited from, after all. Yet, as Tvordi recognizes, he regularly speaks with the voice of the ruling aristocrat who allows the peasants to relax in the countryside only for the duration of a short break, and then orders them back to the plow.

Other poems, again, explicitly reject city life and project the rural world as the safeguard from the hectic, polluted, dangerous, and superficial existence in the urban context. In the countryside man might finally be able to meditate and recover his human dignity in the Stoic tradition. Then again, Herrick railed against the dullness and lack of inspiration from the rural world, longing for the intellectual allure exerted by the city. Tvordi identifies this approach as equivocal, and we could also resort to the term dialectical, not unusual in the history of poetic approaches to nature, as we have observed above already with regard to the poems composed by Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445). In some cases Herrick identified the countryside as inspirational for his poems, and in others he rejected it outright, charging that it prevented him from developing ideas and from writing poetry in the first place.

When Herrick formulates loathing of the rural, he commonly abstains from voicing explicit criticism, and instead turns to figurative language because, as Tvordi observes, this allowed him to reflect upon his own poetic discontentment, sort of as a ventilation for his inner frustration. Living in the city would help him to reconnect with his patrons and strengthen his public standing, while living in the countryside serves 'only' to reenergize him as a poet and to provide him with new poetic inspiration. In this regard, Herrick's poetry illustrates impressively the fundamental tensions that permeate the entire history of poetic and artistic engagement with nature and the rural world in early-modern literature. One could love it and hate it, or both at the same time, depending on the individual situation, social condition, and personal aspirations.

³⁷⁴ The same trend to explore the genre of pastoral poetry can be discovered in contemporary German poetry; see Jane O. Newman, *Pastoral Conventions: Poetry, Language, and Thought in Seventeenth-Century Nuremberg* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). Cf. also James E. Congleton, *Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1684 – 1798* (New York: Haskell, 1968).

While western society has almost always regarded the forest and wild nature as an outright gift by God, as formulated in *Genesis*, irrespective of regular experiences of natural catastrophes (hurricanes, eruption of volcanoes, earthquakes, sandstorms, flooding, etc.), it has also proven to be a contested area in the conflicts between the social classes, for instance, or with respect to the tensions between cities and princes. Contestation also erupted, at least in one specific area, with respect to the privilege of hunting, a privilege which seventeenth-century Dutch women claimed for themselves for a number of reasons, as Martha Moffitt Peacock illustrates in her contribution.³⁷⁵ Medieval art knows numerous examples of noble ladies involved in a hunt, but they are rarely, if ever, depicted in the gruesome, final kill of the animal, and mostly appear as companions and entertainers, though they also seem to have enjoyed hunt as a sport, especially with birds of prey. In general, however, traditionally men were supposed to be in charge and control both nature, the wild, and women, while the latter were associated with the fecundity of the forest and thus were supposed to be by-standers and observers of the hunt. In many ways, men's hunting practices were paralleled with their amatory pursuit of women, her being his 'prey' in literal and metaphorical terms.

Turning to seventeenth-century Netherlandish art, however, Peacock discovers a radical shift in that regard, as the painters from then on hesitated very little to change the traditional appearance of women in hunt, giving them suddenly a domineering role, presenting them clad in trousers, wielding the weapons, controlling the entire hunting scene, leading the charge, and commandeering the entire hunting company. Abraham Hondius (1625–1691) went even so far as to depict a huntress taking on a ferocious boar, traditionally the most dangerous prey in premodern forests, as perhaps best illustrated in the Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. We could even go so far as to identify a remarkable gender reversal presented in those images, if we think, for instance, of the works by Jan Miel (1599–1663). The artist did not leave out the men, but consistently placed them in the background, in the shadow, or sitting on the ground, surrounding a standing lady huntress.

There are many reasons for this unique treatment of the powerful and self-contained huntress in seventeenth-century Netherlandish art. The political situation there during the age of Reformation was heavily leaning in favor of female rulers, hence of women patrons of the arts and literature. More important,

³⁷⁵ In the late Middle Ages we find numerous examples of strong female characters challenging their weak and often imbecile husbands; see the genre of the Old French *fabliaux* of the Middle High German *mæren*. For a good example, see the contribution to this volume by Penny Simons; cf. also Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas* (see note 350), 58–68.

Dutch women played a major role in the fight against the Spanish suppressors during the revolt in the 1580s, until the Protestants finally won and could expel the Spanish troops in 1588.³⁷⁶ Particularly because the forest represented an alternative space, where common rules and principles of behavior, at least according to the norms of aristocratic society, could not be upheld (see above for medieval examples), the Dutch artists felt free, or perhaps were charged to do so by their female patrons, to present the liberated, independent, powerful, and contumacious huntress. This gender reversal was possible because of women's extraordinary successes in governing those provinces during the sixteenth century and in the Dutch Revolt. These female figures did not mitigate the traditionally chaotic and ferocious nature of the forest and its animal occupants, but they forcefully stepped into that forest space and staked their own position, demonstrating that they, as women, felt completely empowered to step up to the plate and assume, when possible, a leading role within their society. Their presentation as masters of the wild space and the animals of prey confirmed that they were also regarded as being in charge of nature.

Talking about rural space also implies, at least in many contexts, social criticism, conflicts within any given society over land rights, the relationship between the upper and lower classes, the conflicts between the rural and the urban population, the economic plight of the peasant class, and sometimes also military upheavals, tensions, and acrimonious wars, such as the peasant revolt in England in 1381 and the Peasant War in Germany in 1524 and 1525.³⁷⁷ In the nineteenth century social injustice, both in the industry and in agriculture, became some of the most hotly debated issues in public discourse, as reflected most poignantly by the theoretical treatises, broadsheets, pamphlets, and manifestoes by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Especially the latter drew some of his inspirations not only from Marx's teachings, but also from earlier, strongly left-leaning land reformers, such as Gerrard Winstanley (1609–1676). In his contribution to this volume, Thomas Willard turns the attention to this highly intriguing, yet also problematic figure who, after two bankruptcies during the English Civil Wars of the 1640s, retreated

³⁷⁶ Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire: The Dutch Heroine Tradition," *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 8 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 557–98. See also *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); James D. Tracy, *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572–1588* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Of course, for the Spaniards the situation looked very different; see Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch Revolt Through Spanish Eyes: Self and Other in Historical and Literary Texts of Golden Age Spain (c. 1548–1673)*. *Hispanic Studies: Culture and Ideas*, 16 (Oxford, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2008).

³⁷⁷ See the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

to prayer and Bible study and turned to religion. Though largely self-educated, he started to write religious tracts with an increasingly political message: The Parliament's war against the King would not be completed until the common lands of England were returned to the common people, who could farm them communally and no longer live in hunger and in debt to large land owners.

As Winstanley soon realized, one of the major problems of his time was the ever growing enclosure of common land claimed by the aristocrats to the great disadvantage of the poor. Winstanley recognized that this was the ultimate result of the feudal system established after the Norman conquest in 1066—a system that lost its claims with the recent defeat of the monarchy and the establishment of a Commonwealth under the rule of Parliament. Winstanley embraced the idea of squatting on public lands. He organized farm workers in Surrey into what became known as the Digger movement for which he was the chief spokesperson and apologist. He insisted that the land which they worked was truly common in nature and could not fall under anyone's ownership.

Deeply religious in his convictions, Winstanley proved to be highly anti-clerical, insisting on the people's right to economic security directly derived from God's love. The digging at Saint George's Hill in Surrey became a rallying cry for many protesters, and the Quakers regarded, as Willard emphasizes, this public action as a symbol of a peaceful settlement of many economic injustices. However, as we also have to realize, Winstanley's attempt had no long-term impact; on the contrary, the process of enclosures continued progressively, and over the next two hundred years or so the pauperization of the rural population only increased.

As we learn from Willard's study, Winstanley's pleas fell on deaf ears. The Diggers lost their cases in court, and parliamentary soldiers ran them off the lands they had worked. Subsequently Winstanley became a small land holder and, later, a successful London merchant married to a wealthy Quaker widow. Though the development of his last days might seem ironic to some who read his story, he remains a cultural icon for justice to the common people. However, Saint George's Hill, although today a highly coveted urban area of extraordinarily expensive properties in the private estate in Weybridge, Surrey, in the United Kingdom, continues to be a site of protesters, even though their efforts can only be regarded as symbolic, without any hope of achieving a major break-through in the economic and political structures of our western societies.

Nevertheless, Winstanley can certainly be considered as a significant ancestor of many modern protest movements directed at or based on public land. In fact, even the "Occupy-Wall-Street" movement in 2011 could turn to this seventeenth-century visionary as a major source of inspiration. The battle for land continues today because land is the basis of all life, and the attempt by the upper classes to

stifle protests by the lower ones for their own economic benefits will ultimately lead to a devastating backlash, maybe even to a protest by nature itself.³⁷⁸

Such political and maybe dystopian perspectives, however, are not the stuff which this book tries to address. However, we must always keep in mind how much medieval and early-modern experiences and ideas have influenced the modern world, directly or indirectly, and have provided the foundations for modern ideas, movements, concepts, or organizations. In this sense, the exploration of rural space in the premodern world allows us to recognize important precedents and harbingers of things to come, and we continue to grapple with the tensions between rural and urban, courtly and ecclesiastical, although today the issue might be much more the conflict between industrial and environmental.

32. Conclusion

I would like to conclude here with a brief discussion of a remarkable song with four stanzas by the didactic Middle High German poet Rumelant von Sachsen (second half of the thirteenth century, probably active between 1273 and 1286/1287). In "Got in vier elementen" (J 1, now I, 1) the poet offers an intriguingly striking explanation of God's essence, identifying Him first with the four elements and ascribing to Him the power of having absolved people from all sinfulness. Referring to Christ, Rumelant makes the fascinating comparison between the torture which Christ had to suffer with His flesh having been stabbed through, and the soil on the field which is broken open with the plow. Just as the earth subsequently bears good fruit as a result of the farmer's labor, so Christ's Passion has brought forth good fruit. The crucifixion hence emerges as God's gift, as the seedling, to mankind, which the poet identifies with the plowman. Once Christ had considered people's weakness, He was filled with compassion and came to rescue mankind from the devil's clutches:

Got in vier elementen
sich erscheinet.
ob wir den nicht recht erkennen,
der uns hât gereinet?
aller sünden smitten
wuosch uns abe sîn bluot.

³⁷⁸ See also Giovanni Fiaschi, *Potere, rivoluzione e utopia nell'esperienza di Gerrard Winstanley*. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Giurisprudenza dell'Università di Padova, 88 (Padova: CEDAM, 1982); David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

sîn vleisch wart durchstochen
 sam diu erde,
 die mit phlüegen wirt zebrochen.
 dar nâch der vil werde
 an dem krûtze mitten
 hienc; sîn vrucht ist guot.

der uns sîn vleischlich erde in acker brâchte,
 ze sâte er wart gephlüegēt in der marter.
 dô er menschliche brôdicheit bedâchte,
 dô wart menscheit im trûter unde zarter.

nû kumpt sîn erbarmen
 uns ze trôste,
 sît daz er die vreuden armen
 gnædichlîche erlôste
 von des tiuvels kyten
 ûz der helle gluot.³⁷⁹

[God makes Himself manifest
 in the four elements.
 Should we not acknowledge Him properly,
 who has cleansed us?
 All the sinful dirt
 He washed off us with His Blood.

His flesh was stabbed through
 like the earth
 that is broken open during plowing.
 Thereafter the highly sublime one
 hung squarely on the cross;
 He bore good fruit.

He who placed His fleshly soil into our fields,
 was plowed under as seedling through His Passion.
 When He considered man's weakness,
 mankind became even dearer and beloved to him.

Now His mercy
 comes to us in consolation,
 insofar as He liberates those who are void of joyfulness
 through His grace

³⁷⁹ Holger Runow, *Rumelant von Sachsen: Edition – Übersetzung – Kommentar* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 43; for a commentary, see 191–92.

from the devil's clutches,
and rescues us from the hellish heat.]³⁸⁰

Rumelant deserves our great respect for this highly expressive reflection on what Christ's Passion truly means for all of mankind which cannot survive without His mercy. For our purposes, however, this song above all demonstrates most convincingly how much agricultural metaphors were of great significance for all Christians, since everyone was supposed to identify him/herself with the first man, Adam, whose life here on earth began as a plowman (see Fig. 1). Rumelant's poem provides an exceedingly well fitting connection to William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (see Daniel Pigg's contribution), Johann Tepl's *Plowman* (see above), to the world of the *Books of Hours* (see Albrecht Classen's and Lia B. Ross's contributions), to Pieter Brueghel the Elder's paintings of the four seasons (see above), and to the poetic-political discourse in sixteenth-century English literature where Puritans and Popularists battled over the true meaning of popular art, resorting to the image of the plowman and the prostitute (see Kyle DiRoberto's contribution), all representing, in their own ways, avatars of the original concept that man is, fundamentally, nothing but a plowman here on earth.

Not surprisingly, then, we can easily detect numerous references to the farmwork throughout the year as symbols of human virtues and vices, or morality and justice. One convenient and truly striking example would be the early fourteenth-century preacher's handbook, the *Fasciculus morum*, which has survived in twenty-eight manuscripts, which confirms its great popularity.³⁸¹ Considering what things might hinder people from giving alms, for instance, the anonymous author provides a whole sequence of agricultural images in order to clarify his theological arguments, such as: "In the same way, alms or the grain of a good deed is stunted when it becomes exposed to the wind of human praise and of pride and is not covered with the soil of humility" (V.XXV, p. 545). To be a good gardener, or planter, the preacher admonishes his audience to proceed carefully: "The second obstacle occurs when, in contrast, the seed is laid too deep [sic] in the soil, so that its sprout cannot come up" (545). Next he refers to the danger of frost that could hurt the seed (547), then to the threat to the seed resulting from weeds,

³⁸⁰ The translation is mine, and it might well be the first one ever made. There is very little research on Rumelant, but see Freimut Löser, "Von kleinen und großen Meistern: Bewertungskategorien der Sangspruchdichtung," *Sangspruchdichtung: Gattungskonstitutionen und Gattungsinterferenzen im europäischen Kontext: Internationales Symposium Würzburg*, 15. – 18. Februar 2006, ed. Dorothea Klein, Trude Ehlert, and Elisabeth Schmid (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2007), 371–96.

³⁸¹ *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. and trans. Siegfried Wenzel (University Park, PA, and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989). See also his monograph, *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and Its Middle English Poems*. The Mediaeval Academy of America Publication, 87 (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1978).

brambles, and rocks (547), from drought or too much fertilizer (547), and the like. Finally, he urges his audience:

Prima est quod antequam iac(i)atur in terram, necessaria est diligens preparacio terre, quia si sit infructuosa, debet primo comburi igne contricionis et postea arari vomere confessionionis. Et nota: sicut enim terra quando aratur, illa que profundius iacet superius evertitur, sic revera in confessione faciendum est. (548)

[before the seed is cast on the soil, the latter must be carefully prepared; if it is sterile, it must first be burned with the fire of contrition and then be plowed with the plowshare of confession. And notice: when the earth is plowed, what lies deeper is thrown up on top. We must do likewise in confession, for what is hidden at the bottom of one's heart must be turned up and cast out through confession. (549)]

The plow itself gains supreme relevance as a symbolic object, fundamental for all life, in all likelihood another echo of the account of Adam after his expulsion from Paradise, being forced to live in the post-lapsarian world as a plowman: "The plow itself will be your goodwill to work well and to persevere. Its blade, that is, *coulter* and *share*, will be the grief and contrition for your sins. The six oxen will be your five senses plus your memory, which are to plow your soil well, namely by examining all your senses and your memory as to what, how much, in what way, why, where, and with what help you have committed a sin" (549). As we read in *Genesis*:

"... maledicta terra in opere tuo; in laboribus comedes ex ea cunctis diebus vitae tuae. Spinis et tribulos germinabit tibi, et comedes herbas terrae. In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane donec revertaris in terram de qua sumptuis es, quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris." (3:17)

[cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return).³⁸²

Moreover, the preacher appeals to the sinner to take care of the seedling, to weed the land, and to place good soil on the field. Finally, to provide a sense of what the particular result of all these efforts will be, we are told: "you will reap the harvest and bind it in sheaves by persevering in good work, and you will take the sheaves to the barn of good conscience where the crop is threshed in frequent penitential exercises" (549). If we think of the illustrations in the *Books of Hours* again, we suddenly begin to realize where the great interest in those elements came from and how they gained a fully realistic dimension only in due course.

³⁸² *The Vulgate Bible. Vol. 1: The Pentateuch, Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2011),

Rural space, as we might say, one more time, indeed proves to be central and critical for medieval and early-modern mentality, literature, the arts, culture at large, religion, imagology, individual and collective perception, and the global world view. This would not mean that we would have to reinterpret everything we have known so far about the Middle Ages and the early modern age; instead we only have to recognize that the rural world was just as important in the premodern period as the court, the church, and the city, if we pay close enough attention to all those details, objects, and voices which the contributors to this volume will turn their attention to.

Of course, the other dimensions often seem to be much more glamorous and eloquent, and the farmer regularly appears as the butt of the joke; nevertheless the rural dimension in a wider context was fundamentally important after all, as our new ecocritical thinking begins to reveal, once again. For that reason preachers could easily refer to the activity of plowing and seeding in an allegorical sense to convey their moral and religious lessons.

In the powerful dialogue poem by the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine monk Ælfric (ca. 955–ca. 1012), *Colloquy*, a conversation between teacher and his students intended for the improvement of the latter's Latin skills, we learn much about the daily lives of ordinary people, including the plowman, the oxherd, the fisherman, and the hunter. Then a lawyer appears who serves as intermediary and consistently and strongly emphasizes that all life depends on the work by the plowman. He rejects the blacksmith and the carpenter, who would have preferred to be given priority, and emphasizes that they are all important, but only after the farmer: "let there be peace and concord among you and let each one of us show your skill to the other and let us meet together at the plowman's house where we may have food for ourselves and fodder for our horses. This is the advice I give to all workers so that each one may practise his art more conscientiously, since he who neglects his skill will himself be separate from it" ³⁸³

Although courtly love poets commonly idealized the natural world, transforming it into a theatrical stage for their erotic projections, they still recognized the relevance and meaningfulness of that rural environment. Our volume represents, in this regard, almost something like a cultural-historical archaeology, removing layers of a veil that has tended to blind us far too long as far as the role of the woods, the rivers, the lakes, the birds, the animals, snow, the mountains, plants and trees was concerned in relationship to the protagonists, the writers, and the artists.

³⁸³ Ælfric's *Colloquy*, ed. G. N. Garmonskway (1939; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1978); here quoted from the online English translation at: <http://www.kentarchaeology.ac/authors/016.pdf> (last accessed on Jan. 23, 2012).

A final example, completely unexpected maybe, can be found in mystical literature, such as in Johannes von Marienwerder's *Life of Dorothea von Montau*, who lived from 1347 to 1394 and related her mystical visions to her confessor Johannes. He first jotted those down in Latin, and later composed a Middle High German version of them between 1404 and 1405, intending it to be a book of spiritual uplifting for the Teutonic Knights and Prussia's lay audience. Ultimately he really hoped that the *Vita* would promote his efforts to have Dorothea canonized, in which he failed personally. There were several attempts in later centuries, but that canonization did not occur until 1976. One of the hallmarks of Dorothea's mystical visions was the degree of physical injuries she inflicted on her own body as a means to approximate the Godhead. Repeatedly Dorothea or her confessor resort to agricultural imagery, such as crying so many tears that they flow down like rain water into the furrows of a plowed field. Being graced with the power to overlook the whole world and thus to perceive how sinful people are everywhere, Dorothea expresses her deep pity: "Do sy daz tat, do irscheyn ir das ertrich rechte ap is were wol betowit und daz wasser stunde noch in den vorchten, als is pflegit zu sein, wen is sere gereynet hot"³⁸⁴ (As she did so, the world appeared well-watered, as though water were still standing in the furrows as it does after a heavy rain³⁸⁵). More important proves to be the reference to her tortured body which she had wounded herself from early on, starting at age seven, soon having one scar next to the other, suffering badly and consistently, and all this out of absolute devotion to the Godhead:

und machte mit den vorgeanten gezoyen eyne wunde bi der andirn von den scholdirn bis da di ermil wantin, und von der huf ufwert, als is di kleyder bedackten, eyne wunde bi der andirn, und glichir wys tate sy daz vorne zcu an ire Brust, das ir wunden so dichte bi ein andir worin, ab is eyne wunde wer, ir lipmit castyunge als eyn ackir mit eyne pfluge durchvarn. (210; Book One, XV)

[With such devices she inflicted one wound beside the other from her shoulders down to the hems of her sleeves and from the hips upward as far as her clothes covered her body. And she treated her breasts in the same way until all these individual wounds locked like one single big wound and her body resembled a plowed field (46)]³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Johannes Marienwerder, "Das Leben der heiligen Dorothea," ed. Max Toeppen. *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum: Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergang der Ordensherrschaft*, ed. Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen [sic], and Ernst Strehlke. Vol. Two (1863; Frankfurt a. M.: Minerva, 1965), III, 179–391; here Book XV, 298.

³⁸⁵ Johannes von Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, A Fourteenth-Century Recluse*, trans. Ute Stargardt. *Studies in Women and Religion*, 39 (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 166.

³⁸⁶ See also Ute Stargardt, "Male Clerical Authority in the Spiritual (Auto)biographies of Medieval Holy Women," *Women as Protagonists and Poets in the German Middle Ages: An Anthology of Feminist Approaches to Middle High German Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Göppinger Arbeiten zur*

Undoubtedly, both for the mystic and her audience the employment of such metaphorical language constituted no difficulties; on the contrary, the agricultural domain as a ubiquitous sphere in everyday life relevant for every member of medieval society served her exceedingly well to convey the religious message concerning her body as a parchment for God to write Himself onto her. We even recognize a poetic approach in this and other passages based on these rural elements since the mystic projects herself, in a way, as mankind's savior here on earth, as the medium connecting all people with the Godhead. Plowing and irrigating the fields thus prove to be fundamental activities for everyone, either in concrete or in symbolic terms. Little wonder that in the late Middle Ages plowing emerged also as a strong sexual metaphor both in Shrovetide and Carnival plays, such as Pierre Gringoire's 1512 play *Raoullet Ployart*.³⁸⁷ And the rich evidence of art history, such as in the fifteenth-century *Books of Hours*, nicely compliments this observation.

An intriguing example would be the *Golf Book* (1540, British Library, Additional 24098), richly illuminated by Simon Bening. I provide a copy of one image at the very end of this volume, a miniature showing a peaceful rural scene with a farmer and probably his wife at rest, while another man continues cutting the wheat. The artist's love for the detail, his fascination with the many different concrete objects and tools, with clothing, animals, plants, and the lake in the background clearly confirms how much the rural world had gained in respect, even at court and in the city, wherever the patrons resided and commissioned such wonderful *Books of Hours*.³⁸⁸

Germanistik, 528 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), 209–38. Now cf. David Wallace, *Strong Women: Life, Text, and Territory 1347–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28–30.

³⁸⁷ See the contribution to this volume by Sharon King.

³⁸⁸ See my contribution ("Rural Space in Late Medieval *Books of Hours*") to this volume.



Fig. 1: Stained glass window, west facade, Canterbury cathedral
Adam working in the field



Fig. 2: Johann Tepl, *Der Ackermann* (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 76, fol. 7v)



Fig. 3: Bruges: a man milking a cow, a woman carrying a yoke for two milk buckets



Fig. 4: Tower of To[u]r, Glastonbury: Woman milking a cow



Fig. 5: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "The Harvesters," 1565 (Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York)

Chapter 1

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Reforming the Monastic Landscape: Peter Damian's Design for Personal and Communal Devotion

The traditional narrative of medieval Italy is a history of cities. Scholars have privileged urban space, but I would argue that Italy's rural spaces merit equal attention. Uncultivated lands and isolated forests played a significant role in the religious life of northern Italy in the central Middle Ages. During the eleventh century, monks and hermits transformed the landscape by their very presence in the countryside and the rapid proliferation of their formal foundations. This century saw the rise of two of the most prominent and influential monastic congregations of the period, the Camaldolesi and the Vallombrosan orders with foundations spanning Tuscany, Umbria, and the Marches. Of no less importance, the congregation of Fonte Avellana also emerged in the eleventh century under the direction of Saint Peter Damain, who developed a design that twinned eremitic and coenobitic communities and depended on varying degrees of experience in the "wilderness."

This essay offers a case study of two houses in the congregation, which reveals that Peter Damian valued "wilderness" in very specific terms. Like the Desert Fathers, Damian understood monks and hermits thrived unimpaired by the temptations and distractions of the urban scene, but Damian moved beyond ancient eremitic and coenobitic models. He developed a unique form of religious life in which monks and hermits used their respective environments to reconcile personal and communal devotion.

Theologian, papal polemicist, and self-proclaimed humble monk, Peter Damian had a hand in shaping the outcome of many salient events during the eleventh

century. His preeminence in papal reform tends to overshadow his activities on the local level, but over the course of his lifetime he never turned away from his native region, the Marches of northeastern Italy. He began his career as a modest ascetic at the hermitage of Fonte Avellana near Gubbio and eventually became prior in 1043. Even after Damian answered the call of Rome and became a cardinal and member of the papal curia in 1057, he continued to oversee the activities of the congregation he created around the hermitage. As prior, he personally founded several additional daughter houses. Two in particular, the monastery of Saint John the Baptist at Acereta (founded between 1053 and 1057) and the hermitage of Saint Barnabas at Gamogna (founded c. 1053),¹ he situated in close proximity, a decision that reflects the symbiotic relationship he encouraged between them. In addition Damian believed it should be every monk's goal to graduate from a coenobitic to an eremitic existence. These two sites represented the physical manifestation of his plan.

In a letter to an unidentified abbot written in 1067, Damian described the transition from monastery to hermitage as the desired goal of all monastic life according to

¹ The editors of the charters of Fonte Avellana date the first document pertaining to the monastery at Acereta between 1053 and 1057 (*Carte di Fonte Avellana, i Regesti degli anni 975–1139*, ed. Celestino Pierucci and Alberto Polverari. *Thesaurus Ecclesiarum Italiae*, IX [Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1972], vol. I, document 13, 31–32). The prominent historian of the congregation, Mansueto Della Santa, also declared in 1961 that the monastery must have been founded after Gamogna, around 1056 or 1057 (*Richerche sull'idea monastica di S. Pier Damiani* [Arezzo: Edizioni Camaldoli, 1961], 110). The foundation date of Gamogna is generally accepted to be earlier, between 1053 and 1055 (*Annales Camaldulenses*, ed. D. Johanne-Benedicto Mittarelli and D. Anselmo Costadoni, vol. II [Venice: J.B. Pasquali, 1756], 233). However, Damian described the original donation of land by the Guidi count Tehtgrimus as intended for the monastery and not the hermitage, which presents a strong case that Damian constructed Acereta first (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel. *Epistolae*: 2, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, IV [Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1988], vol. II, no. 63, 221–25; here 223. The English translation is available in *The Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Owen J. Blum, vol. III [Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1992], Letter 63, 16–20; here 17). See also Ruggero Benericetti, *L'eremo e la cattedra: Vita di S. Pier Damiani* (Milan: Ancora, 2007), 52, n. 58; Jean Leclercq, *San Pier Damiano Eremita e Uomo di Chiesa* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1972), 105, n. 61 (originally published in French as *S. Pierre Damien, ermite et homme d'église* [Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1960]); Giovanni Lucchesi, "Per una vita di san Pier Damiani. Componenti cronologiche e topografiche," *San Pier Damiano nel IX centenario della morte (1072–1972)*, vol. I (Cesena: Centro studi e ricerche sulla antica provincia ecclesiastica ravennate, 1972), 13–179; here 139. Both Leclercq and Lucchesi agree that Acereta was constructed first. In addition, Acereta controlled the patrimony of two houses in 1060, though that fact does not present solid proof it existed before Gamogna. On this point see Giuseppe Cacciamini, "Le fondazioni eremitiche e cenobitiche di S. Pier Damiano. Inizi della congregazione di S. Croce di Fonte Avellana," *Ravennatensia V: Atti dei convegni di Ravenna e Rovigo, 1972–1973* (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1976), 5–33; here 10. The Romualdian tradition would have the monastery founded second. Therefore, the date remains roughly fixed between 1053 and 1057.

the Benedictine Rule.² Damian had provoked the abbot's anger when he accepted some of his monks at Fonte Avellana. The abbot argued that the Rule prohibits monks from leaving their own community in favor of another.³ Damian responded in turn that when Saint Benedict composed his Rule he sought no jurisdiction over hermits. Therefore, Benedict never forbade a monk to be received at a hermitage. In fact he encouraged monks to leave the monastery for the eremitic life. In the Rule, Benedict writes that hermits undergo a "probationary" phase in the monastery and after this period of spiritual training find themselves able to combat earthly temptations independent of their community and the support of their brethren.⁴

As Damian writes, "For one wishing to reach the heights of perfection, the monastery must be transitional, and not a place to stay; not a home, but a hostel; not the destination we intend to reach, but a quiet stop along the way."⁵ For this reason it is convenient to speak of those in the monastery of Acereta as "brothers," and those in the hermitage of Gamogna as "hermits," even though Damian conceived of hermits as more advanced brothers.⁶ Although the distinction in practice was not absolute, understanding the relationship between brothers and hermits was a fundamental component of Damian's plan for monastic reform.

In the case of Acereta and Gamogna, Damian intended the former to be more than a transitional locus. He wanted the monastery to support the hermitage in every way possible to preserve its way of life. Originally, the two houses shared a common patrimony, which would have relieved the concerns of its administration from the hermitage and freed the hermits from secular tasks that could distract from spiritual pursuits. Although internal disputes required Damian to put an end to the shared patrimony in 1060, the monastery remained obligated to receive sick

² *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel. *Epistolae*: 2, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, IV (Munich: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1993), vol. IV, no. 152, 5–12; here 6. The English translation is available in *The Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. and trans. Owen J. Blum, vol. VI [Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2005], Letter 152, 7–14; here 7–8.

³ See RB 1980, *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. Timothy Fry, Timothy Horner, and Imogene Baker (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981), ch. 61.

⁴ *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry, Timothy Horner, and Imogene Baker, ch.1 (see note 3).

⁵ "Ad perfectionis igitur summa tendenti monasterium transitus debet esse, non mansio, non habitatio sed hospitium, non finis intentionis, sed quedam quies itineris" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. IV [1993], no. 152, 5–12; here 8; English translation in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. VI [2005], Letter 152, 7–14; here 9).

⁶ Damian writes that the brothers use the name "hermit," for "humility's sake" (*humilitatis causa*) although they prefer the term "penitents" (*paenitentes*) (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 50, 77–131; here 83–84. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1990], Letter 50, 289–334; here 293).

hermits from Gamogna and care for them as long as their infirmity required. Likewise the hermitage retained its sole obligation; Gamogna would freely welcome any monks coming from the monastery.⁷ Though the charter recording this mediation does not specify the reason for the monks' visit, the clause provides for those brothers ready to take the next step and transfer permanently to the community at Gamogna.

In this relationship of mutual support, the hermitage would assure the sanctity of the monastery and the monastery would manage the administrative burdens of the hermitage.⁸ The idea was not original to Damian; he borrowed it from his champion of eremitic life, Saint Romuald (ca. 950–1027). Romuald of Ravenna, onetime monk at the monastery of Saint Apollinaris near Classe and renowned ascetic, traveled throughout the countryside of Umbria and the Marches in the early eleventh century where he founded and reformed several hermitages and monasteries. He had previously spent time living as a hermit outside the walls of monasteries, and the idea of a dual community followed. He founded the hermitage of San Salvatore at Campus Malduli in 1012,⁹ which would become the head of the Camaldoli order, and two years later the monastery of Fonte Buono joined the complex, located around three kilometers from the hermitage.¹⁰

⁷ "Hac eciam nostra precepcione decernimus ut monasterium et heremus hoc inter se invicem debeant quatinus, cum necessarium fuerit, et monasterium infirmos fratres heremi ad refocillandum et sustentandum usque ad sanitatem cum licentia prioris fraterna benignitate suscipiat et heremite fratres heremi monachus de monasterio venientes, cum licentia abbatis, libenter admittant" (*Carte di Fonte Avellana*, ed. Celestino Pierucci and Alberto Polverari, vol. I, document 15, 36–39; here 38). In accordance with the precepts of the Rule, the charter specifically requires the monks seek permission of the abbot before visiting the hermitage.

⁸ Pompeo de Angelis, "I Vescovi Avellaniti a Gubbio," *Gubbio e San Pier Damiani: Atti del 13 Convegno del centro di studi avellaniti, Fonte Avellana-Gubbio, 1991*. Centro di studi avellaniti (Città di Castello: Tibergraph, 1991), 29–39; here 32.

⁹ There is some debate over the foundation of Camaldoli. According to tradition, as described in the *Annales Camaldulenses* (ed. D. Johanne-Benedicto Mittarelli and D. Anselmo Costadoni, vol. I [Venice: J.B. Pasquali, 1755], 346–47) a wealthy nobleman, Maldolus, granted the original piece of land upon which Romuald placed the hermits. However, the charter evidence indicates that Bishop Theobaldus of Arezzo was the hermitage's first patron. He granted the brothers a substantial gift of properties their pertinences in 1027 (cf. *Regesto Camaldoli*, ed. L. Schiaparelli and F. Baldasseroni. *Regista Chartarum Italiae*, I [Rome: Ermanno Loescher & Co., 1907], document 86; 36). On the foundation of Fonte Buono, see Augustinus Fortunius Florentinus, *Historia Camaldulensium*, part I, lib. I, ch. XXIX (Florence: Bibliotheca Sermartelliana, 1575).

¹⁰ Damian's *Vita* of the saint does not describe in any detail the founding of Camaldoli, but the author was aware of Romuald's earlier cohabitations, and most likely Damian confused the site of Aquabella, which he does discuss, with Campus Maldoli in the text (Peter Damian, *Vita Beati Romualdi*, ed. Giovanni Tabacco [Rome: nella sede dell'istituto Palazzo Borromini, 1957], ch. XLVI, 87). Aquabella traditionally equates to Vallambrosa. Damian writes that Romuald traveled from the monastery of San Salvatore Val di Castro and decided to remain not far from the

Damian's *Vita* of the saint reveals he believed Romuald shared his attitude on eremitism as the apex of religious life.¹¹ But the first dual communities of hermits and monks far predated Romuald's foundations.

Although the notion of a community of hermits may strike our modern sensibilities as ironic, given the fear and insecurities of an eremitic existence in the remote deserts of late-antique Egypt and Syria, many wandering ascetics found it natural and necessary to band together. Saint Anthony may have stood as the fourth-century's ascetic *par excellence*, but his example of solitary life proved hard to follow for some. In his *Vita* of Pachomius (d. 348) Jerome explains that the saint and contemporary of Anthony enclosed a wall around the huts of his hermit brethren, which provided them a sanctuary from external threats, and subjected them to a common rule. Around the same time communities of hermits living in cells around the cell of a revered ascetic appeared in the Levant. Unlike their Egyptian counterparts these communities, or *laurae*, never subscribed to rule but obtained individual spiritual instruction from their head. Dual communities came into vogue also in the fourth century. Saint Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), for example, founded many hermitages near monasteries so that one community could support the other. Basil, unlike Peter Damian, considered coenobitism the height of religious life. In the West we find echoes of Basil's model in the communities at Vivarium, founded Cassiodorus (ca. 490–ca. 583) in Southern Italy, where both coenobitic and eremitic foundations existed side by side to support one another.

Peter Damian wrote his own history of the eremitic vocation in his rule for Fonte Avellana that included the Old Testament examples of Elijah, Elisha, and Moses. He also mentioned Saints Paul, Anthony, and John the Baptist, who all lived in the wilderness "without eating food supplied by men."¹² Damian concluded that the institution had two branches, those who lived in cells and those who wandered in the "desert"; the former he called hermits and the latter, anchorites. According to Damian, the Book of Jeremiah recounts that the first anchorites were the descendants of Jonadab, who drank no wine or any other spirit.¹³ They lived in

Apennines in a place called Aquabella, which we should understand as Camaldoli and not as Vallombrosa (*Annales Camaldulenses*, ed. D. Johanne-Benedicto Mittarelli and D. Anselmo Costadoni, vol. I, 340 [see note 9]).

¹¹ Romuald did not always succeed in convincing monastic communities of the merits of this idea (Peter Damian, *Vita Beati Romualdi*, ed. Giovanni Tabacco, ch. XXXIII, 73).

¹² *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 50, 77–131; here 83. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 50, 289–334; here 293.

¹³ Jeremiah 35:6; *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 50, 77–131; here 83. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 50,

tents and stopped traveling only once it became dark. As Damian explained, the Psalms tell us that these men suffered captivity during the persecutions when the Chaldean army invaded Judaea and forced them into the cities, and as a result they despised towns as prisons and regarded the wilderness and its solitude as a "peaceful place to dwell."¹⁴ However, Damian noted that anchorites during his own time were scarce or even nonexistent and chose therefore to concentrate his discussion on hermits.¹⁵

Damian, therefore, had a long tradition of monastic modeling behind him. While he drew on the works of his predecessors, he innovated in the execution of their ideas. Unlike Romuald who made one prelate preside over both monastery and hermitage at Camaldoli, Damian appointed a separate head of each community. Arguably he wanted to allow each community greater administrative independence.¹⁶ In keeping with this decision, he meant for the communities to exist in two distinct ways and the topography of the sites reflects his particular agenda. Gamogna and Acereta are located on the modern border between the regions of Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, in what was once a contentious and highly competitive political economy. It is a mountainous region and the chief agricultural crops are olives and grapes, although contemporary charters also record properties with mills possibly used to grind grain. The social geography in the eleventh century of this region included reforming monasteries, local imperial monasteries, powerful lay elite landowners, small landholders, and tenant farmers. Small settlements dotted the landscape, which raises the question, how isolated were these religious houses? What was their relationship to the "wilderness," the archetypal locus of ascetic experience?

Only four kilometers separate Gamogna and Acereta, though the distance appears much greater. Both houses occupy the rural countryside near the modern town of Marradi, but Gamogna rests in the foothills of the Apennines while Acereta occupies a lowland valley. The physical structure of the monastery is not unlike

289–334; here 293. As Blum notes, Jeremiah cites only wine (293, n. 16).

¹⁴ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988) no. 50, 77–131; here 83. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 50, 289–334; here 293. This scriptural reference describing the dichotomy of city and countryside mirrors Damian's description of rural ascetic manifestations discussed in his letter to the urban hermit, Teuzo (Letter 44; discussed below).

¹⁵ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 50, 77–131; here 83. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 50, 289–334; here 293. This definition of anchorites reveals that Damian invented a unique taxonomy for ascetic movements.

¹⁶ Benito Catani, "L'insediamento monastico ed eremitico," *Studi Romagnoli* XLIV (1993): 491–538; here 506.

other contemporary houses; the site includes a cloister, church, and refectory.¹⁷ Damian described life in a monastery as more than a withdrawal from the world. He considered a monastic community a "small number among the many who were about to perish in the flood, and [were] brought . . . into the refuge of the ark."¹⁸ This metaphor characterizes the monastery, in Damian's words, as a "vivarium of souls,"¹⁹ or a safe haven from worldly corruption, a term he notably borrowed from Cassiodorus' *Institutiones*.²⁰ The monastery, however, ensured not only enclosure from the secular but also removal from the wilderness.

Although monasteries historically have existed in city and countryside, many monastic foundations in Italy during the central Middle Ages frequently claimed undesired and uncultivated lands in the rural *contado*.²¹ Many monks regarded the practice of taming the landscape and creating a livable space as fundamental to their spiritual development. Damian founded Acereta away from nearby localities, and far from the larger urban centers of Faenza and Florence. He most likely built the monastery in that particular place primarily to support the hermitage,²² but regardless of its origins the result of Damian's decision meant the monastery was granted the opportunity to forge a community out of nothing in an undeveloped forested area. The process recalls Old Testament accounts of the Hebrews moving into the Land of Canaan; like the Hebrews, the monks would also bring the worship of God into a new territory.²³

¹⁷ No contemporary structures survive. The earliest medieval building, the church, dates to the thirteenth century. However, these more recent buildings were erected on the foundation of the original monastery. Only excavation could reveal to what extent the early modern structures follow the medieval floor plan, but a survey of the site I conducted with a small crew in 2009 suggested that the architects of the later reconstructions of Acereta did build directly over the original foundation and made only minor changes.

¹⁸ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988) no. 86, 459–504; here 462; The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, vol. III, ed. Blum (1992), Letter 86, 255–98; here 257. In no uncertain terms this metaphor underlines the privileged position ascetics occupied in Damian's vision of Christian society.

¹⁹ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988) no. 86, 459–504; here 462; The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, vol. III, ed. Blum (1992), Letter 86, 255–98; here 257 (see note 18).

²⁰ Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum. Einführung in die geistlichen und weltlichen Wissenschaften*, übersetzt und eingeleitet, ed. Wolfgang Bürgens (Freiburg i. Br., New York: Herder, 2003), I, 29.

²¹ Ultimately their ascetic pursuits stand, at least in theory, equally unaffected by rural or urban surroundings because the monastery was, as Damian put it, a *vivarium*.

²² See note 1 above.

²³ Joshua 24:5; see also Gregory the Great's *Life of Saint Benedict* that shows (in an earlier time) this mentality: "Ubi uetustissimum fanum fuit, in quo ex antiquorum more gentilium ab stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur. Circumquaque etiam in cultu daemonum luci succreuerant, in quibus adhuc eodem tempore infidelium insana multitudo sacrificiis sacrilegis insudabat" (Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum libri IV*, 2.8.10, lines 97–102, ed. A. de Vogüé, SChr, vol. 260 [Paris:

After the initial construction of the monastery, the community would have had to carve out an existence and provide for basic needs. For example, at Acereta there remains today evidence of arable land in the eleventh century. Fruit trees and fields yielding root vegetables thrive on site and throughout the valley, and as stated earlier, eleventh-century documents repeatedly mention viniculture and olive production nearby. The monastery's primary source of income came from rents and produce from nearby properties, acquired through charitable donations, but there is every indication the monks could have also engaged in agriculture on their own premises. Moreover, Benedict himself prescribed that monks participate in agricultural activities. As he wrote, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul,"²⁴ and he specifically identifies plowing and planting as legitimate ways to pass the time. Benedict's words on manual labor are also well known, "They must not become distressed if the local conditions or their poverty should force them to do the harvesting themselves. When they live by the labor of their hands, as our father and the apostles did, then they are really monks."²⁵

Peter Damian believed that manual labor was essential to spiritual improvement and complained to his disciple, Aripandus, that many religious neglected to learn a trade and therefore lacked discipline.²⁶ He expressed a similar grievance to Desiderius of Montecassino in 1061. He told the abbot of his concern that monks tended to gossip during hours in which they should be working or reading, according to the Benedictine Rule.²⁷ However, Damian himself had some difficulty following his own advice. Unable to work with his hands in any "useful" way, he turned to writing. In a letter he sent to two bishops in 1059 he stated:

I have undertaken to write several small works, not, indeed, that I might place them on the pulpits in the churches (which would be presumptuous) but especially because

Les Éditions du Cerf, 1979], 168). Cf. the English translation by Myra L. Uhlfelder. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues, Book II: Saint Benedict*. The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 18.

²⁴ "Otiositas inimica est animae" (*The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry, Timothy Horner, and Imogene Baker, ch. 48 [see note 3]).

²⁵ *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (see note 24), ch. 48. See also Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum libri IV* (see note 23), ed. A. de Vogüé, I, 3. Damian cites Gregory frequently in his letters.

²⁶ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 54, 139–48; here 145. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 54, 344–54; here 351. This letter is one of many Damian sent to his disciples at Fonte Avellana, with whom he communicated regularly while he was away from the hermitage.

²⁷ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 86, 459–504; here 498–99. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. III (1992), Letter 86, 255–98; here 292. In reading Damian's correspondence with Alberic, it is important to remember that neither Damian's position as cardinal or prior of Fonte Avellana placed him on equal par with Alberic in terms of political capital.

without some sort of occupation I could not bear the idle leisure and the tedium of a remote cell. As one who does not know how to engage in useful manual labor, I write that I might restrain my wandering and lascivious mind with a leash.²⁸

Cluny was the forerunner in substituting the divine office for manual labor. Damian similarly advocated forms of labor compatible with life in one's cell, a life of prayer and penitence; that is, copying codices, studying and reading.²⁹ Therefore, it is conceivable the monks of Acereta embraced the same reinterpretation of the Rule and did not labor with their hands, but Damian never said as much. He prescribed practices for hermits, not monks. His favorable attitude toward acquiring a trade would support the practice of agricultural cultivation as a means to ensure monastic discipline.

The attention required to maintain a garden made the process as much a spiritual exercise as a practical one. However, the act of cultivation would have held significance beyond a faithful interpretation of the Rule.³⁰ Even if the monks engaged in only small-scale production at the level of a *hortus Monasticus*, this monastic garden would have provided for the monks' alimentary needs; in addition to fruits and vegetables, the monks could plant legumes, a fundamental base for their diet.³¹ The medieval garden demanded substantial labor: the enclosure of the space, followed by furrowing and then planting and finally harvesting. From mid-April to mid-October furrowing and planting had to be repeated roughly every twenty days, depending on the type of seed. The monks would also have to weed the garden often and perhaps transplant items.³² In sum, the garden received frequent and careful attention. For the monks, the repetition of these tasks was a daily exercise in manipulating their environment and working as a community.

²⁸ "Noverit sanctitas vestra, dilectissimi mihi patres et domini, quia praesumpsi quaedam opuscula scribere, non tam videlicet, ut legivis aecclesiasticis, quod temerarium fuerat, aliquid adderem, quam ob hoc praecipue, quia sine quolibet exercitio inertis ocii et remotioris cellulae tedia non perferrem, ut qui operibus manuum utiliter insudare non noveram, cor vagum atque lascivum quodam meditationis loro restrigerem, sicque cogitationum ingruentium strepitum atque accidiaie orepentis instantiam facilius propulsarem" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 62, 219–20; here 219. The English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. III [1992], Letter 62, 14–15; here 14).

²⁹ Della Santa, *Richerche sull'idea monastica* (see note 1), 79.

³⁰ See *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (see note 24), ch. 66 on the presence of a garden on site. Gardens were not exclusive to the countryside, but existed in towns as well (see Bruno Andreolli, "Il ruolo dell'Orticoltura e della frutticoltura nelle campagne dell'alto medioevo," *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto Medioevo*. Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 37 [Spoleto: La Sede del Centro, 1990]), 175–209.

³¹ Andreolli, "Il ruolo dell'Orticoltura" (see note 30), 197.

³² Andreolli, "Il ruolo dell'Orticoltura" (see note 30), 196.

The monastery of Acereta may have been enclosed, but it was by no means entirely isolated. The structure today stands next to the modern road, which likely runs parallel to the medieval one. As Francesca Fei has shown, throughout northern Italy monasteries commonly sprang up next to roads. It is not surprising that monasteries would appear along highly trafficked routes,³³ but why would Damian have placed Acereta next to a road where it would have been relatively accessible and open to potential dangers? The simple answer is that the benefits outweighed the risks. Although cloistered, the monks would have to travel occasionally outside the walls to collect produce such as grain and perhaps also rents, visit nearby markets, or even other monasteries. Damian's letters tell us that inter-monastery contact took place often within the congregation.³⁴ Acereta was responsible for two communities, and their access to the outside world served to sustain the hermitage.

While the monastery of Acereta provided the hermits with a connection to the world, the hermitage of Gamogna was a retreat from it. The monks labored to change the space in which they resided, but the hermits on the hill above sought to exist more within their natural surroundings. Damian insisted that hermits live in the wilderness, that they remove themselves as far from the urban scene as possible. The best example of his attitude on this point comes from another of his letters. Between 1055 and 1057, Damian wrote to an urban hermit to chastise his behavior and in so doing explained the qualitative differences between urban monasticism and his ideal ascetic way of life.

The hermit Teuzo, formerly of the monastery of Santa Maria in Florence, had left his community to reside in cell within the city center. At the request of his abbot, Albizo, Peter Damian visited Teuzo in his cell and attempted to reason with him and persuade him to return to the fold. In the end, the man refused to listen and violently expelled Damian from his cell.³⁵ Damian did not give up, however, and

³³ Francesca Fei, "Note sulla viabilità e sugli insediamenti abbaziali nelle marche," *Le Abbazie delle Marche, storia e arte*, ed. Emma Simi Varanelli (Roma: Viella, 1992), 233–48; here 234. On roads in the Marches see *Le strade nelle Marche: Il problema nel tempo*. Atti e Memorie della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Marche, 89–91, vol. III (Ancona: Presso la Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche, 1987); *Istituzioni e società nell'alto medioevo marchigiano*. Atti e Memorie della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Marche, 86, ed. Massimo Maroni, vol. I (Ancona: Presso la Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche, 1983); Lorenzo Quilici, *La rete stradale del ducato di Spoleto nell'Alto Medioevo*. Atti IX Congresso Internazionale di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1983), vol. I, 399–420.

³⁴ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel. *Epistolae*: 2, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, IV [Munich: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1989], vol. III, no. 133, 452–54; English translation available in Blum, *Letters*, ed., vol. V (2004), Letter 133, 73–75.

³⁵ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 44, 7–33; here 12; English translation in available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), Letter 44, 221–43; here 225.

later wrote a lengthy diatribe criticizing Teuzo's way of life. He asked of Teuzo, "If you are a monk, what business do you have in cities? If you are a hermit, what are you doing among the crowds in town? What do noisy marketplaces or towered fortresses contribute to a cell?"³⁶

In Damian's mind, the problem was the goal of Teuzo's asceticism. He accused the man of seeking fame and glory. As he wrote, "Now those who act as if there was a shortage of forests and seek solitude in the cities, what else are we to think but that they are not looking for the perfection of solitary life, but rather for applause and glory?"³⁷ He proceeded to explain that practicing public feats of asceticism such as fasting would grant him singular authority and influence over the surrounding crowd. As a result Teuzo would come to judge himself not by the "testimony of [his] own conscience," but by the opinion of the "flattering mob."³⁸ The city held additional threats to the fundamental principles of ascetic life. As Damian writes, "to be unacquainted with wine in the city would be a miracle."³⁹ Damian's own rule for hermits⁴⁰ proscribed strict moderation in the consumption of wine. In addition, while a hair-shirt attracts no attention in the hermitage, in the city its wearer becomes a spectacle. Likewise for bare feet and bare legs.⁴¹ While in the city a "flimsy quilt" would be considered roughing it, hermits should sleep

³⁶ "Sed, queso, si monachus es, quid tibi cum urbibus? Si heremita, quid tibi cum civium cuneis? Quid enim cellae vel fora streptentia vel turrita conferunt propugnacula?" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–33; here 12; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990], Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

³⁷ "Enimvero qui tamquam deficientibus silvis solitudinem in urbibus quaerunt, quid aliquid credendum est, nisi quia solitariae vitae non perfectionem, sed favorem potius et gloriam aucupantur?" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–33; here 13; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

³⁸ "Illic igitur captato vulgi favore civumfluus, quicquid tibi mens vel improvisa dictaverit, proprio iudicio lex habetur, quicquid praeceps lingua decurrerit, sententia deputatur. Nec te metiris iuxta testimonium propriae conscientiae, sed secundam opinionem potius assentatricis turbae, apud quam videlicet venalis pallor in vultu et auditum nomen stuporem mentibus ingerit" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–33; here 13–14; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

³⁹ "Vinum namque in urbe nescire prodigium est, in heremo bibere satis ignobile" (Reindel, ed., *Briefe*, vol. II [1988], NR. 44, 14; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

⁴⁰ Damian's wrote his first rule for hermits between 1045 and ca. 1050, and the second dates between 1050 and 1057, with a second edition appearing in 1065. As the dating of the second rule accords with the foundation date of Gamogna, I refer to that rule in my text. On the dating of Letter 50, see *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 50, 77–79, n. 1–3.

⁴¹ "Cilitium in heremo vestimentum, in urbe spectaculum. Cruribus pedibusnudatis incedere in heremo quidem regula, in foro autem afflictio cernitur indiscreta" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–13; here 14; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

on “rushes and papyrus.”⁴² Lastly, whereas one assumes silence as the norm in a hermitage, in the city it is all too rare.⁴³

Damian exhorted Teuzo to visit a rural hermitage, to see how hermits lived and thrived in the wild. For Damian, the “woods” or *silvae* enabled a rigorous asceticism that would be impossible to achieve in the city. But he located the hermitage some distance from the monastery, which was also in a rural setting. He desired an even more remote and untamed plot of land. Gamogna even today is surrounded by vegetation and reachable only by rough mountain trails, and conditions could only have more extreme in the Middle Ages, particularly during the winter months.

In the eleventh century a church stood on site, possibly with an adjoining scriptorium or refectory, but these would have been the only permanent structures. The hermits lived in cells alone or with a companion. Their cells could have been constructed away from the church, even at a significant distance, in the hills surrounding the property. Today there remains no trace of these cells; their architects did not built them to last, they built them to keep out the elements without any further embellishment. This living situation was not unique to Gamogna. There were numerous analogous hermit communities founded throughout Italy in the spirit of Eastern monasticism. The vision behind the layout of this hermitage, however, depended on more than recalling the Desert Fathers.

The hagiography of Eastern ascetics tells us that early hermits took extreme measures to immerse themselves in the wilderness and even preferred to live off the land and to eat “naturally,” meaning they foraged for food and ate uncooked vegetables and fruit.⁴⁴ This tradition of eating raw vegetables as an expression of sanctity carried over into the West in early medieval hagiographical texts. Gregory

⁴² “In haeremo stratum molle iuncus est vel papyrus, inter cives applauditur centone contentus” (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–13; here 14; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

⁴³ “Quod enim illic conversatio rara mirabile, reddit hic sotietas fraterna commune. Ac per hoc, quod illic praeconio laudis attollitur, hic generaliter inditum gloriam non meretur” (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 44, 7–13; here 14; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 44, 221–41; here 225).

⁴⁴ For example, see *Vitae Patrum sive Historiae Eremiticae libri decem*, vol. I, Liber IV, ex *Dialogo Severi Sulpicii et Institutis et Collationibus Joannis Cassiani*, ed. J. P. Migne. *Patrologia Latina*, 73 (Paris: Garnier, 1879), ch. X, col. 822. For a discussion of these texts, see Massimo Montanari, “Vegetazione e Alimentazione” *L’ambiente vegetale nell’alto Medioevo*. Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 37 (Spoleto: La Sede del Centro, 1990), 281–322. See also Jacques Le Goff, “Il deserto-foresta nell’Occidente medievale,” *Il meraviglioso e il quotidiano nell’Occidente medievale*, ed. Francesco Maiello, trans. Michele Sampaolo. Storia e società. 2nd ed. (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1983), 25–44. For the English version, see “The Wilderness in the Medieval West,” id., *The Medieval Imagination*, 2nd ed., trans. Arthur Goldhammer (1985; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 47–59.

of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, composed in the sixth century, describes the diet of the hermit-recluse Hospicius during Lent as roots from Egyptian herbs, which he had obtained from traders.⁴⁵ Similarly Jonas of Bobbio's *Life of Saint Columbanus*, written in the late seventh century not long after the Saint's death, recounts a tale of Columbanus and his companions fasting for nine days and surviving on the bark of trees and roots of herbs.⁴⁶

At Gamogna there is no sign of such a tradition. The experience of living in the wilderness did not include foraging for food. As Damian states anchorites, not hermits, engaged in that behavior. The hermits at Gamogna lived according to the Benedictine Rule, which Damian somewhat modified according to his own specifications including the strict regulation of wine, and with the addition of bodily mortification. Going without food served as a penitential exercise, and as Damian states, "By fasting we mean eating bread with salt and water."⁴⁷ The brothers fasted throughout the year, five days a week from the Ides of September until Easter. The time between Easter and Pentecost would include four fast days with meals served twice daily on Tuesdays and Thursdays.⁴⁸ Regular meals consisted of cooked vegetables and legumes from produce shared with their brothers in the lower valley.⁴⁹ Unlike the Desert Fathers the hermits at Gamogna

⁴⁵ "Fuit autem apud Nicensim eo tempore Hospicius reclausus magnae abstinenciae, qui... in diebus autem quadragesimae de radicibus herbarum Aegyptiarum, quas heremitae utuntur, exhibentibus sibi negotiatoribus alibatu" (Gregory of Tours, *Liberi Historiarum* X, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levinson. *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. I, part I, liber VI [Hanover: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1951]), 272.

⁴⁶ Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, ed. Bruno Krusch. *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum Separatim Editi*, 37 (Hanover: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1905), I, 167–68.

⁴⁷ "Ieiunare autem illos dicimus, qui panem cum sale et aqua percipiunt" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 50, 77–130; here 89; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 50, 289–334; here 297). Damian remains consistent here with his earlier rule (Reindel, *Briefe*, vol. I [1983], NR. 18, 168179; here 172; English translation in Blum, ed., *Letters*, vol. I [1989], Letter 18, 159–170; here 163).

⁴⁸ Damian also mentions that from the octave of Pentecost until the feast of Saint John the Baptist (June 24th), the hermits would be served a stew every Tuesday and Thursday at 3 pm. From the feast of Saint John until the 13th of September a meal would be served twice a day, also on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while they observed their fast as usual on the remaining four days (Sunday being excluded) (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 50, 77–130; here 87–88; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II [1990] Letter 50, 289–334; here 296). Damian stipulates the schedule of fasting in far more detail in his earlier rule (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. I [1983], no. 18, 168–79; here 172–73; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. I [1989], Letter 18, 159–70; here 163–64).

⁴⁹ Damian uses the word "*pulmentum*," which Blum et al. translate as "stew," but we have no further details (see *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 50, 77–130; here 88, n. 27). Presumably their diet mirrored that of their brothers in the monastery, with the exception of far

lived in the wilderness not solely for its own sake. To be sure, Damian perpetuated an earlier tradition that characterized the wilderness as a battlefield in which hermits fought on the front lines against evil.⁵⁰ Forests had also been reputed sites for the miraculous since antiquity. But as Damian explained in his letter to the urban hermit, Teuzo, hermits must live in the remote *silvae* also because they are not cloistered. To preserve their particular form of religious life the hermits exploited their isolation to encourage silence and contemplation. If Damian placed the monastery, a more lax religious⁵¹ community, in too close proximity, its presence could potentially impede these goals.

Furthermore, the hermits' experience in the wilderness corresponds to Damian's plan for devotional practices. The physical layout of Gamogna and Acereta suggests that spirituality at the hermitage emphasized personal devotion while the monastery embodied communal devotion; rather, life at Gamogna did not separate personal and communal devotion, but sought to integrate the two. As stated above, the brothers lived in a community, but in individual cells. Practices such as going barefoot throughout the year and self-flagellation the hermits would have carried out alone. In addition, spiritual exercises depended on complete silence, which made them profoundly personal. The isolation of the site and of the cells on the Apennine hilltop increased the efficacy of these practices. However, these hermits lived together. Even though they performed many spiritual acts alone, the entire community engaged in the same practices.

Damian wrote in his Rule for hermits that the virtue that surpassed all others in the community was mutual charity. For that reason, he required that each man in the hermitage share willingly all his worldly possessions. He further wrote that if a brother took ill his companions would volunteer to nurse him. Lastly, when a brother died, everyone would fast for seven days, perform seven-hundred prostrations, discipline his body seven times with one-thousand lashes, chant thirty psalters and celebrate mass for the deceased for thirty consecutive days. In

more frequent fasting. Damian uses the word "*pulmentum*," which Blum et al. translate as "stew." The term undoubtedly indicates a cooked meal, but we have no further details. (See *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II [1988], no. 50, 77–130; here 88, n. 27). Presumably their diet mirrored that of their brothers in the monastery, with the exception of far more frequent fasting.

⁵⁰ "Illi siquidem sub divinae protectionis clipeo delitescunt, isti vero in campum certaminis prodeuntes victoriae titulis decorantur" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. IV [1993], no. 152, 5–12; here 12; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. VI, [2005], Letter 152, 7–14; here 13).

⁵¹ In Damian's own words, "Non itaque ad monasterialem laxitudinem ab heremitica vos libeat districtione descendere et relicta lege spiritus carnalis illecebrae lenociniis consentire" (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. I [1983], no. 18, 168–79; here 177; English translation is available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. I [1989], Letter 18, 159–70; here 168).

addition, all priests would personally celebrate seven masses.⁵² Damian oriented the site of Gamogna toward personal piety but mandated provisions rooted in fraternal cooperation to balance the system of devotion.

Damian's design for Gamogna was as pragmatic as it was spiritual, and the spiritual aspect of his plan focused more on living in a community than on living in the wilderness. The location *in silvis* was nonetheless fundamental to Damian's vision for two reasons. On an isolated hilltop, the elements made life all the more physically demanding. It also shielded the hermits from prying eyes that would encourage vanities, to which Teuzo would have been subjected in a city like Florence. In contrast the monks of Acereta created a spiritual oasis in the wilderness, a cloistered island or *vivarium*. In both cases one's interaction with, and understanding of, the physical characteristics of the landscape were as important as the landscape itself. Arguably, at least in this sense, Gamogna and Acereta were not unlike Cîteaux. Any other connection between these communities would be a teleological fallacy; the Cistercian order appeared later and rose in response to different circumstances. But it would be an invaluable avenue for future research to consider how later reforming congregations, like the Cistercians or the Carthusians, reinvented the relationship between religious life and the "wilderness" as Damian had done in the Italian Apennines.

In light of all these observations, I would like to consider briefly why rural Italy is so neglected in this period. Historiography of the later Middle Ages discusses the countryside primarily as a passive player in the growth of cities, therefore the *contado* does not appear in the narrative until relatively late. But the relationship between city and countryside was a dynamic one, not limited to production and consumption. I would suggest that while the city created a distinct urban culture, which included economic, social, and religious life, alongside this development was the articulation of a new spirituality in a rural setting that helped deal with age-old Christian concerns in a new context.

⁵² *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. II (1988), no. 50, 77–130; here 98–99; English translation available in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. II (1990), 289–334; here 304. Damian's earlier rule omits only the additional masses performed by priests (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Reindel, vol. I [1983], NR. 18, 168–79; here 175; English translation in *Letters of Peter Damian*, ed. Blum, vol. I [1989], Letter 18, 159–70; here 166).

Chapter 2

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Women's Place and Women's Space in the Medieval Village

In a 1987 essay Susan Mosher Stuard observed that “acquaintance with the source material from the European centuries before 1500 suggests that women may have had a prominence then which they have since lost.”¹ This deceptively simple statement marks out an ambitious and as yet unrealized interpretive program, since historians who have studied village women have tended to emphasize women's “place” over women's “space,” that is, to argue that women's agency must be considered within the framework of its circumscription by men. In concrete terms, it is argued that there were gendered spheres in village topography, i.e., that “[i]n peasant society the woman's sphere and place were the house, close, and village; the man's were the fields, roads, and forests.”² Not only was there a “female house” and a “male outside” but, further, “when women went outside the house they did so in the company of other women.”³

These approaches are important to our understanding of women and rural space in the Middle Ages, but in this essay we pursue a different path, following Stuard's lead, and employing a cultural history approach to study the formation

¹ *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), vii.

² *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 1.

³ Barbara Hanawalt, ‘Of Good and Ill Repute:’ *Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73; and see Chapter 5, “At the Margins of Women's Space in Medieval Europe,” 70–87, for a fuller discussion.

of neighborhoods in an English village at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries.

To explore these questions we turn to the people and the records of the village of Ellington (modern Cambridgeshire), which belonged to the estates of Ramsey Abbey from the time of the monastery's foundation in 970 until its surrender to the Crown on November 22, 1539. A rich body of material exists for our study, especially the incomparable estate administrative records that survive for a number of English lordships: court rolls, account rolls, landed surveys, customals, all more or less based upon the knowledge and testimony of locals (just as the great royal inquests of *Domesday Book* and the *Hundred Rolls*). Court rolls survive for hundreds of English villages, beginning in the late thirteenth century and continuing for centuries thereafter.⁴ These records are an on-the-spot transcript of the business of local courts, sometimes described as a cross between a small-town newspaper and a record of the proceedings of a police court. The (by no means complete) series for Ellington provides the full names of about 940 men, women, and children (1280–1460), a sense of their life span, and some knowledge of the activities and relationships of many of them. These records are not verbatim transcripts, but rather brief entries that summarize the cases that come before the court and its jurors on the day the court meets: cases such as land exchanges, debt and credit arrangements, minor acts of aggression, etc. Though most adults would have attended the court, men's appearances outnumber those of women by about 5:1.⁵

I want to argue that the activity and social relationships of women *qua* women were a significant factor in the on-going divisions in local space that accommodated and directed change, i.e., the "production of space,"⁶ particularly with respect to the neighborhood. We will conclude our discussion by asking whether this cultural role for women amounts to "agency," or whether in fact it represents another aspect of the phenomenon, noted above, of the male policing of female movement. The study of neighborhoods is well-developed in some historiographies (e.g., twentieth-century U.S.) and is beginning in others (e.g.,

⁴ The manor of Wakefield in Yorkshire has court rolls from 1274–1926. It should be noted that while court rolls differ from village to village—because villages differ from each other—the sort of inquiry undertaken here could be pursued for other communities. Ellington and another Ramsey Abbey village, Upwood, have been studied in Olson, *A Chronicle of All That Happens: Voices from the Village Court in Medieval England*. Studies and Texts. 124 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996), with a focus on the issue of self-government. For a full bibliography of primary source materials for Ellington, see 235–38.

⁵ See Olson, *A Chronicle* (see note 4), Chapter One for a fuller discussion of the people and sources. Our database includes about 4,000 court roll entries for men and about 670 for women in Ellington.

⁶ Like other historians interested in space, I draw on Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1974; Oxford, UK, and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

modern Africa).⁷ Although it is as yet little developed for medieval rural history, it has a vital contribution to make to the study of space, gender, and culture in these communities, where most people lived in the Middle Ages and long after.⁸ Brief discussions of the medieval rural neighborhood can be found in surveys of peasant social and cultural history,⁹ where the focus is often on village associations and collective action. Interpersonal and group relations are typically not analyzed; when they are, the discussion is frequently framed in terms of class conflict, and villager "solidarity" (i.e., interpersonal relationships) is seen as the result of seigniorial oppression. Thus, Susan Reynolds asks whether the village was "united primarily by the dues owed to the lord or lords and consequent common interests against them, and how far did the free and unfree, the richer and the poorer . . . form one community?"¹⁰ In the making of the village and its history, this traditional approach emphasizes divisive and extraneous forces above the communal and internal forces that may have animated the members of that community.

Some attention has also been given to physical reality, that is, to space, in the village, typically focusing on demographic history: according to Werner Rösener, a "remarkable compactness" would have characterized later medieval villages, due to "growing settlement density," and residents would have "had to move closer together—no matter whether they were individuals or entire families." Such changes in turn induced a "greater variety of social and legal relations, associations and tensions"; for example, he argues that growing population density was probably related to an increased consciousness of and sense of responsibility for the village poor (and if true, a good example of the forces of

⁷ See, for example *Crisis & Creativity: Exploring the Wealth of the African Neighbourhood*, ed. Piet Konings and Dick Foeken. African Dynamics, 5 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006).

⁸ A discussion of women and neighborhoods in two villages was begun in my book, *A Mute Gospel: the People and Culture of the Medieval English Common Fields*. Studies and Texts. 162 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), Chapter Two, "Peasant Names and Peasant Women," esp. 110–19.

⁹ For example, Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300*. 2nd ed. (1984; Oxford University Press, 1997); Werner Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans. Alexander Stützer (1990; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Brief attention is paid, not to the village neighborhood but to the medieval village as a "community of neighborhoods" in a discussion of the history of "rural solidarities" in Monique Bourin and Robert Durand, "Strangers and Neighbors," *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 180–90.

¹⁰ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities* (see note 9), 102–03; see also 129–30, where she states that one result of "seigniorial pressure upon local communities...was to increase conflicts between peasants and lords The sharpening of conflict with a single lord could be both a cause and an effect of local unity, though equally the division of lordship may sometimes have stimulated a village to develop its own institutions."

community rather than division).¹¹ In addition, the crowding of people over time into houses built to hold fewer inhabitants would have led to some diversification in buildings and a reorganization of the structure of the village itself.¹² Susan Reynolds also draws attention to the dynamics of growing population density, noting that villagers “lived in bigger and more densely populated villages in 1300 than in 900,” and that “small neighbourhood communities” which were undoubtedly active and varied in their activities in the tenth and eleventh centuries were surely more active and varied in their activities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹³

While precise definition of exactly what a physical neighborhood might be is lacking in many of these studies, there clearly is a sense of internal change, the importance of local developments, and an on-going division of space within the village. Robert Fossier points to different “quarters” or “islands” in the village, such as the various centers of production and communal meeting-places, like the village oven, the square or green, the rows of houses and their yards, the water supply (where “it was the women who reigned supreme”) for drinking water and washing, collective store-pits, the workshops of the artisan (pre-eminently the blacksmith), the mill (where women standing in line socialized and exchanged news), the cemetery or *atrium*, the “field of peace” and the enclosed space around the church.¹⁴

Four decades of archeological excavation at Wharham Percy in Yorkshire (in which less than 6% of the total area of the village was excavated) underscore the complexity of rural building, in the village at large as well as on the peasant toft and croft: Maurice Beresford and John Hurst point out that castles and monasteries were more likely to have clearly defined areas of activity over longer periods than a peasant domestic site where a building made for one purpose might be rebuilt and used later for another.¹⁵ In short, peasant holdings and the larger structure of the village both underwent constant change: from its first clearing, no medieval village was a “fixed settlement.” In general, scholarship to date is informed by a

¹¹ Rösener, *Peasants* (see note 9), 164.

¹² Jean Chapelot and Robert Fossier, *The Village and House in the Middle Ages*, trans. Henry Cleere (1980; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 138.

¹³ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities* (see note 9), 153.

¹⁴ Robert Fossier, *Peasant Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Juliet Vale (1984; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 64–66. In a study of slave neighborhoods in the American South, Anthony E. Kaye enumerates the elements in the “built environment,” the “most consistent arrangement in the neighborhood. Slave cabins were arrayed in neat rows along a dirt street. The great houses were surrounded by their attendant outbuildings—kitchen, smokehouse, stables, barns, chicken coops, icehouses, and other storehouses.” See Kaye, *Joining Places: Slaves Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 34.

¹⁵ Maurice Beresford and John Hurst, *Wharham Percy: Deserted Medieval Village* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 35.

sense of a varied, changing, and organically fragmented "villagescape"¹⁶ where a multitude of forces and actors were at work in shaping, defining, and inhabiting local space. Attention to the continuing story of the unfolding of the villagescape in the High Middle Ages seems all the more justified in view of the growing consensus among landscape historians that the common field village itself was a relatively late arrival in the English countryside, a product of the late first/early second millennia.¹⁷

However, there is still much to be done in terms of a particular focus on the village neighborhood, both as place and process; and where, if anywhere in particular, did women fit in this immense and on-going historical enterprise? Our model will place emphasis not on seigneurial pressure but on peasant agency, specifically on women's role in the meaningful partitionings and understanding of space that were always more or less underway in the village.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of how people understand and thus occupy the places that they frequent, the places where they work and live, the places upon which they depend. It could be argued that the degree to which individuals experience a sense of belonging in the spaces they inhabit has an impact on their sense of liberty and right, their existential security and thus their ability to act. The production of social space is, in fact, central to the history of a place, as Henri Lefebvre has made clear:

(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity . . . [it] is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others . . . [It is] always and simultaneously, both a field of action (offering its extension to the deployment of projects and practical intentions) and a basis of action (a set of places whence energies derive and whither energies are directed). It is at once actual and potential, quantitative and qualitative.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Richard Jones and Mark Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends* (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2006), 155. Jones and Page use the term "villagescape" to mean the "landscape of the vill, manor and parish," all the elements within the village "linking settlements to the arable fields, pastures, meadows and woodlands that lay between them, and to the roads and tracks which joined them together."

¹⁷ For a recent overview of this debate, see Stephen Rippon, *Beyond the Medieval Village: The Diversification of Landscape Character in Southern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), introduction.

¹⁸ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (see note 6), 73, 191.

Lefebvre's notions about social space illuminate Anthony E. Kaye's analysis of the social dynamics, the "social relationships embedded"¹⁹ in space in a very different type of agrarian community, one that provides a rich historical analogue for the medieval historian of rural space: the slave neighborhoods of the plantations in the antebellum South. As Kaye puts it, a neighborhood is a "geography of kinship, work, and sociability" that is constantly being made and remade, for "making places is always a process." Neighborhoods are a product of the continuous processes of daily life—they are states of mind as well as physical places. So a neighborhood is an understanding, too, where the "natural geography len[ds] permanence to the social milieu neighbors inscribe . . . on it." Thus neighborhoods derive from and contribute to the formation of personal identity of those who live there; indeed, neighborhood formation has been described as a "crucial dimension of collective identity formation."²⁰

Instead of notions of seigneurial "pressure," this view of neighborhood formation is anchored in the village and helps us understand the interactions that occurred there, the life that was lived there: again, taking a cue from Anthony Kaye, "[w]hat gave the landscape order for slaves was their own sense of place," and in their constant struggle they "took strength" from their "sense of place."²¹ In the small-scale, relatively stable, face-to-face society of the medieval village, the "production of space" model can deeply enrich our reading of the evidence. The phenomenon of "taking strength" from one's "sense of place" is crucial to the discussion here. In this reading, too, we must understand the emergence of neighborhoods in a village (the production of space) as a process that embraces everyone to some degree: and a woman was a farmer and a villager.

Thus, the present paper hopes to advance inquiry into village space and village women along a number of fronts. Our task of studying village space, already a difficult one, is further complicated by this focus on women's role in the creation of and life in rural neighborhoods, since even those historiographies that have a tradition of neighborhood studies have given little attention to women's participation (indeed the "invisibility" of women farmers in the Middle Ages is replicated in the "developed" and "developing" world today²²). As has been noted for modern African history:

Many studies in African cities have focused on the formation of migrant communities, which are frequently connected with the assertion, defence or invention of ethnic identities. Beyond the domain of marriage strategies, the role of women in shaping

¹⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (see note 6), 89.

²⁰ Konings and Foeken, *Crisis & Creativity* (see note 7), 120.

²¹ Kaye, *Joining Places* (see note 14), 50.

²² See the work of economist Marilyn Waring, in particular *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women Are Worth*. 2nd ed. (1988: Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

these processes of collective identity formation in cities has received little attention. While African urban women traders and businesswomen, for instance, have been described as powerful economic and political actors, their social relations seem to centre on kin and marriage. Women in urban Africa, however, do not only interact with family but also with neighbours, friends, customers and strangers, and move and interact in specific physical and social spaces.²³

What were the "specific physical and social spaces" for village women? To begin with, women's manner of constructing village space and assigning it meaning must certainly have differed from that of men. We know, for instance, that the tithing groups into which boys were sworn at the age of twelve for the purposes of local policing were typically based on residential proximity in the village. Men and boys were the principal actors when the community turned out to "beat the bounds," the ritual of collective circumambulation of the village's boundaries. But women were not "housebound," and the ways in which they participated in village culture did not always—or even frequently—derive from constraint. Part of the problem lies in the fact that while historians obviously realize that human interactions occurred in the village's "face-to-face" society, we tend to ignore them. In so doing, we discount the existence of systems of social capital, defined as "the 'trust, norms, and networks' produced by social organization," "the good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse" that obtained "between [members] of a social unit."²⁴

These are arenas where women may have been most influential, in the "loosely defined networks of reciprocal social credit" that flourished in medieval villages, where individuals created a "problem-anchored" helping network.²⁵ As Werner Rösener notes, the "principal occasions" in the village when peasants needed and relied on the help of their neighbors were births, weddings, christenings and deaths²⁶; all these are events and rituals where women played a central role. Such activities are of course not well evidenced in the "grassroots" type of evidence that has come down to us (here, court rolls). Instead, as Marjorie McIntosh has argued, if we wish to study "networks of social credit among lower-status women in the past we must look for *indirect signs* of their existence in historical sources" [emphases mine].²⁷ George Homans does not use the term "social capital," but that is what he is referring to when he discusses the "sentiments of confidence and

²³ Katja Werthmann, "Urban Space, Gender and Identity: A Neighbourhood of Muslim Women in Kano, Nigeria," Konings and Foeken, *Crisis & Creativity* (see note 7), 117–41; here 120.

²⁴ Marjorie K. McIntosh, "The Diversity of Social Capital in English Communities, 1300–1640 (with a Glance at Modern Nigeria)," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 29.3 (Winter, 1999): 459–90, quoting here from the work of Robert Putnam and L. J. Hanifan, "Diversity," 459.

²⁵ McIntosh, "Diversity" (see note 24), 468.

²⁶ Rösener, *Peasants* (see note 9), 163.

²⁷ McIntosh, "Diversity" (see note 24), 469.

good will among neighbors,” “the sentiments men felt as fellow villagers.” Indeed, according to Homans, villagers

worked together successfully in carrying on the various affairs of their community, and people work together not usually because they recognize that it is to their advantage that there be such cooperation, but because they feel certain active sentiments which make them able and willing to cooperate with their fellows . . . Villagers even had a name for these sentiments: they called them *neighborhood* [*vicinitas* in the court roll].²⁸

In the present paper our lens is trained upon women’s participation in the making of space in the medieval countryside, which includes the “islands” in the village in addition to the household, the usual point of focus. Our model invests with meaning and power the social capital that women created and benefitted from in their day-to-day activities in the village, especially in their own immediate environs, or “neighborhood.” We rarely see directly what they were doing, although English coroners’ rolls and inquisition records give us some good indications: for example, in one study of accidental death patterns it has been shown that women spent more time around the house and village center, with 21.2% of the women compared with 8.3% of the men dying of accidents in their own homes or yards; women also spent more time with their neighbors: 5.8% of women as compared with 3.8% of men met with accidental death in a neighbor’s house or yard.²⁹ The men and women revealed in the inquisition records of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Friuli, studied by Carlo Ginzburg, created and inhabited a rich cultural world deeply anchored in place, neighborhood, and region.³⁰ If we begin by assuming that social capital was created in the village and that it was important, the “indirect signs” provided by court roll data can be scrutinized more closely, can bear more analytical weight.

Did women play a distinctive role in the adaptation to change in small-scale farming communities, specifically in the constructing and “construing” of local

²⁸ George Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (1941; New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975), 82, 408, 106, respectively. As Reynolds points out (*Kingdoms and Communities* (see note 9), 154 and n. 154), words like *vicini* and *villani* and *gebur* “suggest that one of the bonds—perhaps one of the most important bonds—between country people was that they were neighbours.”

²⁹ Hanawalt, “Peasant Women’s Contribution to the Home Economy,” *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial Europe* (see note 2), 7. For a fuller reconstruction of daily village life using data from the coroners’ rolls, see Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bind: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

³⁰ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (1966; New York: Penguin Books, 1985). In the “cult” of the *benandanti*, women must have been central since identifying those who would “fight for the crops” depended on mothers preserving the birth sac from infants born with a caul (which was sometimes baptized at the same time as the infant); see for example, *Night Battles*, 15.

space, over the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries? Let's begin by looking at their activities in the village. Women of course occupied the central role in the household economy, child-care, cooking, brewing, washing, dairy work, gardening, care of poultry, etc., but women were also fully integrated into the web of life outside their door, visiting friends and relations, rendering labor services, traveling to markets, attending court, farming their land. In fact, women's roles as actors and workers were more plastic, more flexible than men's: all hands turned out for the harvest, but male brewers were comparatively few and far between in most villages before the Black Death.³¹

So flexible was women's work that in his study of medieval women and work in town and countryside, Jeremy Goldberg argues that women's "work identity" tended to be fluid, indeed they lacked a "well-developed work identity" because they were "seldom wholly engaged in a single employment."³² Olwen Hufton has also observed that women "at the lower levels of society were remarkably adaptable over the issue of work," taking "what they could as a source of income and adapt[ing] it to their life patterns and the rearing of their children."³³ While there were important gender divisions in medieval farm work, women crossed the boundary into the traditional male sphere routinely, whereas men would only "cross over" in a crisis. Women's "fluid work identity" may contribute to the problem of the general "invisibility" of women farmers, from the historian's standpoint; but what it meant in village terms, whether it had a negative effect on women's status, as Goldberg argues, is a point that deserves further study. Alternatively, that fluidity may have been one dimension of the "prominence" women once had which they have since lost, referred to by Stuard in the quotation above.

Let's turn to the village. The neighborhood approach is in harmony with what we understand about the genesis of the medieval village, "a gradual development of the village community from small groups of families and neighbors who

³¹ The degree to which women dominated rural brewing activity raises a complex question which cannot be addressed here. Helena Graham has argued that "women were dominant in brewing but partly hidden in record" (sic), i.e., when men are presented for brewing infractions in the village court they may "often have been answering for their wives' brewing and retailing of ale." See "'A woman's work . . .': Labour and Gender in the Late Medieval Countryside," in *Women in Medieval English Society*, ed. P. J. P. Goldberg (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 126–48; here 141.

³² P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire, c. 1300–1520* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 335–36. For further discussion of rural women and work, see Judith Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock Before the Plague* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 115–29.

³³ Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500–1800* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 173–74.

eventually formed large co-operatives."³⁴ We know further that neighborhoods were important in the village, that villagers thought and acted in terms of neighborhoods: tithing groups, mentioned earlier, were based on residence on the same street or section of the village; inquests in the village court were frequently if not regularly made up of neighbors,³⁵ and such panels are sometimes specifically referred to as *vicini iurati*, "sworn neighbors." Groups of families who lived next to or near each other entered into joint-ownership arrangements of plows, harness and draft animals, and sometimes engaged in joint cultivation of neighboring parcels of land.

Finally, family surnames like in Estrate (in East Street), atte Peretree, Bythebrok, Atwater, and atte Townsende reveal the natural village tendency to use place in framing social concepts, and in helping residents "get their bearings." Turning again to Kaye's study of plantation neighborhoods for insight here, we learn that slaves had "multifarious ways of taking neighborhood bearings from quarters, the big house, fields, and woodlands . . . [and] even this orderly space was open to interpretation." Further, not all the markers were visual: sounds also have their role to play in the production of space, and hence have a history. Former slaves interviewed after emancipation "recalled hearing a cacophony of sounds from a mile off or more: bells and horns calling the people out of bed and into the fields around daybreak, sticks beating and women singing on washing day, the high-pitched wail of a great wooden screw bearing down on the bales in the cotton press."³⁶

An array of environmental features, more or less present in every European village in the Middle Ages, point to the neighborhood as a fertile setting for the "deployment" of social capital—and in the creation of social capital women were particularly important. When they visited with each other, in their homes, in the village square, in the queue at the mill, etc., the news they relayed to each other was

more than idle gossip. It elaborated the connections between neighbors. It pooled intelligence, synthesized and reformulated all the talk as common knowledge and common sense . . . In creating a lore of the neighborhood . . . [they] embellished the

³⁴ Rösener, *Peasants* (see note 9), 149.

³⁵ Sue Sheridan Walker, introduction to *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield: 1331–1333*. Wakefield Court Rolls Series, 3 (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1983), xii.

³⁶ Kaye, *Joining Places* (see note 14), 34. The importance of including sound in the historical reconstruction of earlier societies is suggested in Lefebvre's observation that "over the course of history the visual has increasingly taken precedence over elements of thought and action deriving from the other senses (the faculty of hearing and the act of listening, for instance) . . . So far has this trend gone that the senses of smell, taste, and touch have been almost completely annexed and absorbed by sight." Lefebvre, *Production of Space* (see note 6), 139.

texture and particularity of the neighborhood in the narratives they crafted, turned mere space into a familiar place, endowed it with meanings, history, and symbolism that set it apart from other neighborhoods. Storytelling, in short, was integral to the creation and re-creation of neighborhoods.³⁷

The late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries provide a good vantage point for our investigation, since this half-century embraced an era of demographic change in the form of population crowding, which affected settlement patterns in the village. On a larger scale, it is worth remembering that in England, as in all Europe, population levels in the generations just before the Black Death of 1347–1352 were greater than they had ever been before or would be again for centuries: the four to five million mark that has been estimated for England's pre-plague population was not reached again until the seventeenth century.³⁸ (It has been observed that in Europe there was more land under the plow in 1300 than at any time before or since). This absolutely *unrepeatable historical moment*, an era of over-crowding and land scarcity, the encroaching of arable upon pasture, the cultivation of marginal lands, declining yields and depressed wages, provides a setting where the on-going process of the "production of space" might alter swiftly—and thus be more visible to us.

Women were more prominent than men in some categories of activity such as brewing and money-lending, and they also had a fairly high profile in raising the hue and cry, being responsible for 40% of all cases in Ellington: indeed, women also had a slightly better record for raising the hue and cry "justly" than did men.³⁹ People who were active in raising the hue and cry had necessarily to be out and about to some degree. Participation in local neighborhood "crime watching" brought women into court in other ways: e.g., it is noted in Ellington's 1311 court roll that Walter Smith broke into Emma Smith's house because she had justly raised the hue and cry on him; and although her husband was the one who raised a hue justly on William le Foulere, William beat the wife of Laurence of Bedford; (and lest we think that this was always a case of male-on-female violence, we note that in 1321 Margery Pilcok bit Joan Pilcok because Joan raised the hue against her justly).⁴⁰ Thus, in spite of the discontinuous nature of court roll evidence, and the

³⁷ Kaye, *Joining Places* (see note 14), 41.

³⁸ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, in *The Population History of England, 1541–1871* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 208–09, estimate the country's population at about four million ca. 1600, and about five million ca. 1700.

³⁹ Olson, *A Chronicle* (see note 4), 94–97.

⁴⁰ These and similar cases that give a sense of the range and character of women's activities in the village are treated more fully in Olson, *Mute Gospel* (see note 8), Chapter Two, esp. 96–98. The standard work for the study of women in medieval rural society remains Judith Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (see note 32), supplemented by Bennett, *A Medieval Life: Cecilia Penifader of Brigstock, c. 1295–1344* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999). Older but still useful, and imbued

5:1 ratio of entries in favor of men's activities, we can get some sense not only of the daily lives of women, but also of the village as a rich field for the creation of social capital. Where women are particularly conspicuous in the evidence deserves close study; and in Ellington they are conspicuous in two neighborhoods.

Let's turn to the evidence for Coten and Sybethorpe, two residential subdivisions (or neighborhoods) that are referred to as "members" (*membrum*) of Ellington in the *Quo Warranto* rolls of ca. 1292 (20 Edw I).⁴¹ Recognition of their distinctness is further signaled to us by the heading for that village's court rolls in the 1290s, which is given as *Elyngton' cum Sybethorpe et Coten* (thereafter simply *Elyngton*). The years around 1300 were the very time when the on-going "production" of village space must have been significantly influenced by relative crowding, particularly in the area for human habitation (as opposed to fields, wood, meadow, marsh, and common paths, lanes and roads).

Coten is the dative plural of the Old English *cot*, meaning cell, chamber, hut, or cottage, hence *Coten* means "at the cottages."⁴² The name occurs in the early rolls (and survived long after our period, appearing in the name *Coton Barn* on the ordinance survey maps of the nineteenth century). The earliest evidence of a cluster of smallholders there derived from a village inquest, although it is housed in an extra-village source, the *Hundred Rolls*, a "large-scale inquiry apparently designed to record land tenure and regalian rights throughout the country" drawn up in the late 1270s.⁴³ In that document a total of four tenants in Ellington are listed as *Coterelli* (occupants of a *cota* or *cot*, hence holders of cottages): William Leonard, Richard le Hunt, Agnes of Beaumeys, and Mabel le Hunte, each holding a messuage (that is, a dwelling) and little or no land: William Leonard held one messuage and two acres of land, Richard le Hunt one messuage containing one rod (ca. 1/4 acre) of land, and Agnes de Beaumeys and Mabel le Hunte, one messuage each.

with a sympathetic sensibility, is G. E. and K. R. Fussell, *The English Countrywoman: A Farmhouse Social History, A.D. 1500–1900* (London: Melrose, 1953).

⁴¹ *Placita de quo warranto temporibus Edw. I, II, & III* (London: G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1818), 301. For an earlier and fuller discussion of these two areas in Ellington, see Olson, *Mute Gospel* (see note 8), 110–19.

⁴² *The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*, ed. A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 239.

⁴³ *Rotuli Hundredorum tempore Henrici III et Edwardi I.*, ed. W. Illingworth and J. Caley (1812; London: Eyre and Strahan, 1818), 2: 630–31. The quotation is from the most recent study of these documents, Sandra Raban, *A Second Domesday: The Hundred Rolls of 1279–80* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), introduction. Raban points out (*Second Domesday*, 15) that the investigations were made by juries of "twelve local knights or substantial freemen drawn from the hundred who, in turn, assessed information supplied by lesser juries from individual vills."

Close inspection of these people and their names leads us a little way into the thirteenth-century village. Hunt is a known Coten surname in the contemporary court rolls: thirteen people named Hunt (Hunte, le Hunt) appear in the rolls over the period 1280–1340, six of whom are women, i.e., Mabel, Elena, Beatrice, Alice, Douce, and an unnamed wife of Nicholas (possibly one of the five whose names are known). Douce (Latin *Dulcia*) had two sons, Richard and Robert, and it was the latter who was cited as son of Dulcia, son of Douce, or Doucesson in nearly twenty entries between 1311 and 1340.⁴⁴ Apart from William le Hunte who served as an ale-taster and juror, and pledged a number of times for other villagers over the period 1311–1340, other Hunt men are more conspicuous by their absence: thus, Walter le Hunte is cited for default of court attendance and being outside the village (these entries fall between the years 1280 and 1322), and Richard Doucesson was outside the vill in 1332/3. As we will see more fully below, the men of such smallholding families were often absent or of low profile in the village. Turning to the Beaumeys family, there are eight people with this surname who were active in the period 1280–1340. Of particular interest is the Agnes de Beaumeys listed in the *Hundred Rolls*, since we learn from the court rolls that she together with a daughter (unnamed) of Richard in Hale found a stray sheep in 1280—a rare glimpse of young women's activities together outside the home, possibly in the fields or woods, the “male” portion of the villagescape. The other named Beaumeys women, Dyonisia and Isabella, are cited in entries that suggest people of slender means: in 1286/1287 the former was “forgiven” (*relaxatur*) 6d worth of fines (presumably due to inability to pay), and the latter was fined 3d in 1294 for gleaning badly.⁴⁵

In the court rolls, the first references to the residents of Coten occur in connection with supervising the local brewing industry, a traditional sphere of women's work in the village. For a brief period, in the 1310s and 1320s, the court enrolled the brewers of Coten as a group, based on the presentment of ale-tasters from their own neighborhood: thus, Richard of Coten, Walter Smith of Coten and Galfridus son of Edith worked alongside tasters appointed to do the same for Ellington. Thus, “The Cottages” formed a quarter of the village that was in part recognizable by the brewing activity of its women, whose sense as a group was perhaps reinforced by their presentment together. We cannot prove, but can only suggest that these developments are related to population levels which peaked in

⁴⁴ One of these citations is from another extra-village source, the royal lay subsidy roll of 1327, where he paid 15½d and is cited as *Robertus filius Dulcie*. See *Early Huntingdonshire Lay Subsidy Rolls*, ed. J. A. Raftis and M. Patricia Hogan. *Subsidia Mediaevalia*, 8 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1976), 165.

⁴⁵ The Beaumeys family/families evidently prospered over time, since a later generation produced two villagers, John and Walter, who appear in the 1327 lay subsidy roll, paying respectively 9¼ and 9½d. See *Early Huntingdonshire Lay Subsidy Rolls* (see note 44), 165.

this generation, a period when the numbers of smallholders were increasing everywhere in Europe (although pressure would soon be relieved in the era of the famines).

Werner Rösener suggests that the rising number of cottagers was a significant social factor in the continuing development of nuclear villages: thus, in the case of eastern Swabia he notes that the “houses and working quarters of cottagers, which often stood in separate rows within the village, filled the gaps within the villages ... (and) turned many settlements which had been hamlets into densely populated villages.”⁴⁶

That women’s daily activities and associations played a role in making Coten into a “place” is further suggested by their conspicuous presence in the court records, in spite of that 5:1 ratio of male:female appearances. Six of the ten men of Coten are identified not by their fathers but by their mothers (Alice, Edith, Rose, Agnes, Beatrice, and Clemence), and their mothers seem to be the heads of households. This would not be a surprising development in a community of cottagers whose labor services were few and whose adult menfolk might work outside the village, travelling in the groups of itinerant laborers that circulated much of the year in rural areas. Indeed, where Coten men are cited there is a sense of straitened circumstances: for example, one of the very few male gleaners (the right to glean after harvest usually being reserved for women from poor families) to appear in the rolls was a Walter le Shepherde of Cotene in 1332, who was received by Stephen of Cotene, who in his turn was pledged by Adam of Coten. (We should also note the distinctive surname of one resident of Coten, Robert *Dryngallday*, the Old English verb *dringle* meaning “to waste time in a lazy and lingering manner”). It is also surely significant that such a small neighborhood (probably not above ten households) should produce such a large number of metronymic surnames, however ephemeral some of these turned out to be: Deneys (from Denice), Edesson/Edithsone, Douce/Doucesson, Matild’, and Muriel. Taken all together, do these elements point to a village “production of space” that links women, names and neighborhood?

In the court roll citations of the 1320s and 1330s we find perhaps the “indirect signs” of the social capital that permeated this neighborhood, for the people of Coten pledged for each other, assaulted each other, and stole from each other, such incidents indicating proximity, dependence, and familiarity. In a particularly interesting and earlier entry (1280) William the son of Alice of Coten was fined and pledged for having failed to make satisfaction to Edith of Coten (*ad satisfaciend’*

⁴⁶ Rösener, *Peasants* (see note 9), 56. The pre-plague, indeed the pre-famine era (1315–1322) also witnessed the largest number of brewers in the village: in nearby Upwood, for example, an average of twelve brewers were presented in each court session before 1318, in which year that number dropped to five. See Olson, *A Chronicle* (see note 4), Table 4–2, 211.

Editham de Coten' super eo quod uerberauit filium dicte Edithe) for having beaten her son, who is unnamed (this would have been either William, Geoffrey, Kynemann). What is remarkable is that the mother is named as the injured party, not the father – had he been present he would surely have been named. Such interpersonal connections among bearers of the same small pool of surnames suggest the presence of “loosely defined networks of reciprocal social credit,” the “problem-anchored helping networks” characteristic of these small communities.⁴⁷

The data for Coten, in short, suggest some of the local factors that influenced the formation of neighborhoods, with special reference to constellations of smallholders: here we see a high profile for women, whose flexible “work identity” contributed to the diversification of their activities and connections in the village. Social credit networks were especially important for village women as a means of providing economic security for themselves and their children. If a woman was single or widowed, if her husband was absent or unable to work, if together they held a small tenement alongside others similarly placed, she could draw on “informal kinds of aid,” which might involve loans of goods or money, taking care of a child or neighbor who was ill, giving or receiving gifts.⁴⁸ These are the kinds of activities that court rolls do not capture unless violence or a dispute occurs that is presented by the jurors or brought to the court's attention by a complainant; we glimpse them only by “indirect signs of their existence.”⁴⁹

Let us turn to the other quarter or neighborhood in Ellington that is identifiable pre-eminently through court roll evidence. Sibethorpe, a hamlet located south of the village, appears in the evidence from the early thirteenth century, when a Walter of Sibthorpe gave land there to Ramsey Abbey in the time of Abbot Hugh (1216–1231).⁵⁰ As we have seen, it was listed as a “member” of Ellington with Coten in the *Hundred Rolls*, and all three places were given in the heading of the court roll in the 1290s. This neighborhood in Ellington received a distinctive impress above all because it contained some if not all of the lands attached to the priest's house; and possibly for that reason women tenants are conspicuous figures. According to the *Hundred Rolls* nine tenants held land of the rector, six of

⁴⁷ McIntosh, “Diversity” (see note 24), 468. For a discussion of the specific entries referred to here see Olson, *Mute Gospel* (see note 8), 114–16.

⁴⁸ These are some of the examples of mutual aid discussed by McIntosh, “Diversity” (see note 24), 468.

⁴⁹ Well-known examples of the phenomenon whereby institutions or practices are revealed only when something goes wrong are the retirement arrangements that were made between elderly parents and their adult children, which stipulated the deliveries of food and clothing and the living arrangements that the latter would provide to the former. We know of their existence only because on occasion these arrangements broke down and the case would be brought to the court for a resolution of the difficulties.

⁵⁰ *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Huntingdonshire*, ed. W. W. Page, Granville Proby, and S. Inskip Ladds (London: St Catherine Press, 1936), 45.

whom were women. These were Mabel Gerold, Cassandra, Helewys, Mabel Cus, Matilda daughter of Matilda, William Chaplain, John Foulere, William Bate, and Edith Gerard. A preponderance of women tenants on rectory lands would be a natural configuration, given the service needs of the priest's household, i.e., cooking, brewing, washing, and housekeeping. Indeed, among the remaining male tenants we might envision that John Foulere (fowler, bird-catcher) and William Chaplain (assisting the priest) also held their tenements as rectory servants.

Little is known about these villagers: Mabel Gerold, probably a widow, held the largest tenement at nine and a half acres and a messuage, to which were attached labor services, 30d rent and a modest rendering in kind (four chickens). Cassandra held one-and-a-half acres of land and the remaining tenants held one messuage apiece. Mabel Cus and Matilda daughter of Matilda, who held a messuage jointly, give the clearest indication of their status as servants because they held no land (and note the metronymic surname *Cus*, possibly a diminutive of Custance or Constance).⁵¹ Further, Geoffrey Gerold, the capital pledge of the "homage of the parson" (i.e., the tithing group for all males over the age of twelve who lived on the rectory lands) was cited for men being outside tithing, which included several men identified as sons of Amice, a Robert Helewys and William Helewys. The existence of a "neighborhood of the rectory lands" was no doubt reinforced by the action of the parson's homage and the high profile of women, as smallholders, widows, brewers, and servants.

The most significant resident of Sybethorpe, for the purposes of this study, was Sarra of Sybethorpe. At first glance this claim seems unlikely, since not a single action of hers is entered in the court rolls. We know of her existence only because two of her descendants appear in the records, John the son of Sarra, who served as a special inquest juror twice in 1310, and Nicholas son of John son of Sarra de Sybethorp, who was granted permission to leave the village in 1306 to study and take holy orders. His request for permission to leave was made at the instigation (*ad instanciam*) of the rector of Ellington. Such an occurrence must have been frequent in the villages across not only England but all of Europe, if Michael Clanchy is correct in his reconstruction of early education for the peasantry: after demonstrating "sufficient ability to learn reading and elementary Latin grammar," the "initial instruction and selection [of would-be clergy] must have taken place in the villages themselves." Indeed, he argues that the "elementary teaching duties of parish priests" were "commonplace"; the "average parish priest" might teach reading and elementary Latin grammar to "one poor boy a year," perhaps a boy who served at the altar.⁵² Thus, the priest who supported Nicholas's request to

⁵¹ P. H. Reaney, *A Dictionary of English Surnames*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 122.

⁵² M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England, 1066–1307*. 2nd ed. (1979; Cambridge, MA:

leave the village in order to study may also have been the person who taught him his letters.

Sarra's complete absence from the evidence is deeply emblematic of much of the foregoing discussion. We cannot see her in the records, long-lived though she must have been, but perhaps she played a major role in the give and take of the village, participating in village networks of social capital which, because these could include the parish priest as well as her other neighbors, would not only make her grandson visible, but indeed would take him beyond the space of his native village.

Did this cultural role for women amount to "agency," or was it instead another aspect of the phenomenon of male policing of female movement? To address this question, we have tried to tease out patterns in the evidence that bears on the locality, and to find the meaning of those patterns, a difficult task even with a much fuller body of evidence. The picture pieced together here suggests that the social capital which women generated in their everyday comings and goings were important in the division and understanding of "space" in early fourteenth-century Ellington, and that women "drew strength" from the places they shaped. Women's associations, woven into the fabric of broader village culture, made them important agents in the "production of space," not by being excluded or circumscribed, but by leaving their mark as it were on village space, through the normal flow of their everyday lives, through the social capital they created and deployed. That response was one strand among many that together constituted a total village response, whose aim was to adapt successfully to a time of rapid change, relative land shortage and crowding. In this view, the neighborhood—thinking about it, inhabiting it, creating it—fostered control and a sense of control, power and a sense of power, because it rendered even more manageable the "place" of the village, a place that was diminutive, familiar, and enduring.

Chapter 3

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“Gebrochen bluomen unde gras”: Medieval Ecological Consciousness in Selected Poems by Walther von der Vogelweide

Ecocriticism, or “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment,”¹ has been slow in coming to Medieval Studies. Often critics have made the claim that the earliest signs of an “ecological consciousness” in Western European literature appear only after the unbridled growth of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution begin to threaten the environment in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.² They sometimes suggest that, before this time, literary works depicted nature generally 1) as a danger from which the urban and courtly environments offered protection,³ 2) as a “challenge” against which the mythic hero tested his mettle,⁴ or 3) as a “pastoral” milieu,⁵ where courtly activities (especially the rituals of courtly love) play out against a backdrop of stylized,

¹ Cheryll Glotfelty, “Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis,” *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press), xviii.

² For example, see Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford, London, New York, et al.: Oxford University Press, 1973), 127–41, and Wolf Lepines, “Historisierung der Natur und Entmoralisierung der Wissenschaften seit dem 18. Jahrhundert,” *Natur und Geschichte*, ed. Hubert Markl. Schriften der Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 7 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1983), 263–88.

³ Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization*. Trans. from the French by Julia Barrow (1964; Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1988), 131–33.

⁴ Albrecht Classen, “Storms, Sea Crossings, the Challenges of Nature, and the Transformation of the Protagonist in Medieval and Renaissance Literature,” *Neohelicon* 30 (2003): 163–82.

⁵ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Trans. from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, 36 (1948; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 193–200.

"natural" allegories and stereotypes and idealized abstractions. Many poems of the medieval period present typical pastoral artifices that assemble a "natural" environment, which becomes the polar opposite of the restrictive rules and customs typical of the court. While pastoral nature lacks realism, it nevertheless provides a ready inventory of conventional images and a convenient milieu in which artists can explore extra-courtly attitudes, ideas and actions, such as extramarital love, without directly challenging the institutions informing their patrons' courtly spaces.

In *Ecocriticism*,⁶ Greg Garrard sketches "three orientations of pastoral in terms of time: the elegy looks back to a vanished past with a sense of nostalgia; the idyll celebrates a bountiful present; the utopia looks forward to a redeemed future." He suggests that therein lies an implicit promise from God that the resources of nature are and will remain available to human exploitation as a symbol of the "possibility of present grace." One finds the treatment of nature as an instrumental and exploitable space in numerous medieval literary contexts. Recently, however, some critics have found evidence of a contrary discourse in writings by a number of medieval authors, artists and other intellectuals.⁷ While it is difficult to define strictly what would constitute an "ecological consciousness" for medieval literature (or, for that matter, for literature generally, wherein the awareness of human impact on environment reveals itself in such profusion and variety), some works evince characteristics that bend or break pastoral conventions and point ahead in time to a number of concepts and concerns of importance to modern ecocritical thinking. For example, such ecological considerations might take the form of a discourse that runs "against the grain" of predominant cultural views on nature, particularly those inherent to the pastoral, or perhaps that of the role which humans play in their extra-urban environment, either with respect to the relationship they forge with other entities in the ecosystem (animals, plants, etc.), or in regard to the direct, real-time effects of their forays into nature and the footprints, literally and figuratively, that they leave behind.

⁶ Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*. The New Critical Idiom (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 37.

⁷ See, for example, the broad range of medieval ecocriticism represented by Sarah Stanbury, "Ecochaucer: Green Ethics and Medieval Nature," *The Chaucer Review* 39 (2004): 1–16; Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jeremy Withers, "The Ecology of Late Medieval Warfare in Lydgate's *Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep*," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 18 (2011): 104–22; and the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen, "Rural Space in Late Medieval Books of Hours: Book Illustrations as a Looking-Glass Into Medieval Mentality and Mirrors of Ecocriticism."

Walther von der Vogelweide,⁸ perhaps the finest poet of the German High Middle Ages, is well-known for deconstructing such conventions as the pastoral, often employing images and rhetoric in new ways that expand the expressive possibilities of the medieval lyric. Several of his poems play with pastoral *formulae* and represent “nature” in an interesting and unique light that forces the audience to reexamine bucolic commonplaces.⁹ However, the question of the extent to which Walther’s poems remove nature from the allegorical, stylized and, therefore, “unreal” realm of the pastoral and restore it to its more “ecological” position, as a proper environment in relationship with and affected by human presence, has not been addressed in critical literature. In this paper I intend to examine images of nature in six of Walther’s best-known lyrics in an attempt to answer the question: is there a nascent environmental consciousness reflected in these poems?

In order to identify traces of such a consciousness, I would like to employ a paradigm suggested by such modern critics as Greg Garrard, Timothy Morton, Christopher Manes¹⁰ and others, who, in their analyses of more recent literary works, attempt to shift the anthropocentric focus of criticism onto a more “ecocentric” one. A new, ecological perspective considers human beings as a part of the ecosphere and emphasizes “interconnectedness,” the principle that humans exist in an unmediated and consequential relationship with both living and non-living entities in the environment, and that human actions have a direct and

⁸ The great variety of critical approaches to Walther’s poetry are summarized in several useful introductory works and collections of essays, including *Walther von der Vogelweide*, ed. Siegfried Beyschlag. Wege der Forschung, CXII (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971); Manfred Gunter Scholz, *Walther von der Vogelweide*. Sammlung Metzler, 316 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999); *Walther lesen: Interpretationen und Überlegungen zu Walther von der Vogelweide: Festschrift für Ursula Schulze zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Volker Mertens and Ulrich Müller. Göppingen Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 692 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2001); *Walther verstehen – Walter vermitteln*, ed. Thomas Bein. Walther-Studien, 2 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2004); Thomas Bein, “‘die ächte lesart’: Über mittelalterliche Texte und ihre Konstitutionen (am Beispiel Walthers von der Vogelweide),” *Text: kritische Beiträge* 9 (2004): 47–63; Will Hasty, “Walther von der Vogelweide,” *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. Will Hasty. The Camden House History of German Literature, 3 (Rochester, NY: Camden House and Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 109–20; and Horst Brunner, Gerhard Hahn, Ulrich Müller and Franz Viktor Spechtler, *Walther von der Vogelweide: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung*. 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (1996; Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009); two particularly useful bibliographies are Manfred Günther Scholz, *Bibliographie zu Walther von der Vogelweide*. Bibliographien zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 4 (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1969), and Manfred Günther Scholz, *Walther Bibliographie: 1968–2004*. Walther-Studien, 3 (Frankfurt . M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2005).

⁹ See, for example, Thomas Bein, *Walther von der Vogelweide*. Literaturstudium (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 107–11.

¹⁰ Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (see note 6), 176; Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Christopher Manes, “Nature and Silence,” *The Ecocriticism Reader* (see note 1), 15–29.

lasting effect upon the world around them. Such a perspective would oppose the elements of the pastoral that appropriate nature as an allegorical, sublime object for human contemplation, placing it beyond physical reach and rendering it eternally pristine and untouchable; instead, this point-of-view would restore “nature” as a legitimately self-constituting, authentic space, upon which human activity can have significant effects. But, in such a perspective, there is a counter-effect as well: nature also becomes an autonomous subject, with which human beings must interact and compromise in order to survive and prosper.

Walther’s adroitness in handling pastoral tropes is evident in his celebrated song, “Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent” (L. 45,37, “Thus the flowers push up from the grass”).¹¹ The tri-strophic poem is structured by an extended comparison between the beautiful things of nature and the beauty of a courtly lady, with which, in the poet’s eye, nature cannot compete. The first few lines of the first strophe provide essentially all that the audience finds out about the poem’s natural setting:

Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent,
 same si lachen gegen der spilden sunnen,
 in einem meien an dem morgen vruo,
 Und diu cleinen vogellîn wol singent
 in ir besten wîse, die si kunnen,
 waz wunne mac sich dâ genôzen zuo?

[Thus the flowers push up from the grass,
 as if they were laughing toward the playful sun,
 on an early morning in May,
 and the little birdies sing well
 in the best manner that they can,
 what pleasure can be enjoyed like this?]

The setting is that of a May morning, the sun shines benevolently, generic flowers anthropomorphically “lachen” (“laugh”) upwards and diminutive birds sing nicely. Clearly, the text recreates the medieval *locus amoenus*¹² with these few, facile and relatively detail-less images. More importantly, the emphasis of the poem is not the natural environment *per se*, but rather the lyrical feeling that the bright, cheerful scene produces in the poet, as a backdrop for the appearance of his

¹¹ All original Middle High German texts are taken from Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*. 14., völlig neubearbeitete Auflage der Ausgabe Karl Lachmanns mit Beiträgen von Thomas Bein und Horst Brunner, ed. Christoph Cormeau (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), here 94–95; the translations into English of titles and texts are my own.

¹² Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 194–200 (see note 5).

beautiful lady in the next strophe. Although the strophe engages the visual sense extensively (save for the avian song), it conveys remarkably little detail. For example, Walther does not identify even the color of the flowers that press through the grass, although one surely senses the joy this event has created in the poet's mood. Similarly, the birds are colorless and lack identifying characteristics, save that they are small and sing very well during the May morning. In this scene, nature serves the idyllic function Garrard¹³ identifies in the pastoral; the present-tense abundance of joy, beauty, and good feeling, however, are interior, within the mind of the poet, who is about to celebrate his love for a sublimely beautiful woman.¹⁴ In just a few opening lines, and with extremely sparse detail, Walther is able to paint all he requires of natural background to set properly an appropriate atmosphere.

However, it is most important to point out that, while the mood of the pastoral environment is joyful, perhaps even giddy, it is a manufactured artifice that merely plays a supporting role to another poetic goal.¹⁵ The picture of nature one receives is vague and inauthentic, while the anthropomorphism of generic flowers, sun and birds provides a basis by which Walther can compare these entities with his beloved. Thus, he fabricates a "nature" that only serves human purposes; the floral and faunal substantives serve as props that either support atmosphere (typical of the pastoral) or set the stage for a comparison. By the poem's third strophe, even the vernal season is reduced to a party for humans: "des meien hôhgezîte" ("the festival of May"), where one can witness the "victory" of courtly, female beauty over that of nature.

Many of Walther's poems present a "nature" that fits this pastoral pattern. However, there are also noteworthy exceptions; more, perhaps, than one finds in the works of other medieval poets. In the following discussion I intend to identify *loci* in poems where Walther either undermines pastoral icons in order to bring greater clarity and detail to his natural descriptions, or develops as authentic a natural setting as possible through specific, concrete and detailed images. They often serve to draw the audience into the poetic setting, creating a lyrical atmosphere that includes a more realistic, and, I maintain, more "ecological" awareness than is possible within the limits of the pastoral.

¹³ Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (see note 6), 37.

¹⁴ See Hubert Heinen, "Lofty and Base Love in Walther von der Vogelweide's 'So die bluomen' and 'Aller werdekeit,'" *German Quarterly* 51 (1978): 463–75.

¹⁵ See Arthur Groos, "'Shall I compare thee to a Morn in May?': Walther von der Vogelweide and His Lady," *PMLA* 91 (1976): 398–405, who asserts that Walther, demonstrating characteristics of "modern" poetic authorship in this poem, challenges the traditions of the *minnesang* in that "the most exalted lady of all is the creation of the poet" (404), and therefore similar to the poetic artifice of nature I describe here.

In possibly his most famous *Lied*, “Under der linden” (L. 39,11, “Beneath the Linden Tree”)¹⁶ Walther presents a “morning song,” or *alba*, in which a young woman sings in praise of the beautiful night she has spent lying in a meadow in the amorous embrace of her lover. He has treated her gently and with great courtesy, and her pleasure in recalling what transpired fills each of the four stanzas with charming and delightful images and language, much of which is typically pastoral. The woman gladly shares her joy with her audience, and she is remarkably forthcoming with details. She even presents the evidence of their love-making, the broken flowers and bent stalks of grass where she lay, as well as the intensely crimson hue of her lips where he kissed her at least a thousand times, both images suggesting the girl’s loss of virginity during this night of passion.¹⁷

dâ unser zweier bette was,
 dâ mugent ir vinden
 schöne beide
 gebrochen bluomen unde gras . . .
 . . . Kuster mich? wol tûsentstunt:
 tandaradei,
 seht, wie rôt mir ist der munt.

 [there, where the two of us made our bed,
 there you can find
 together quite nicely
 broken flowers and stalks of grass . . .
 . . . Did he kiss me? Easily a thousand times:
 tandaradei,
 look how red my mouth is.]

¹⁶ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 11), 77–78; attesting to the fame of this poem, the body of secondary literature on it is huge, such that Manfred Gunter Scholz has even suggested a “Ruhepause” for its critics: see his *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 8), 124; some recent examples include Anne Marie Rasmussen, “Representing Woman’s Desire: Walther’s Woman’s Stanzas in ‘Ich hoere iu sô vil tugende jehen’ (L 43, 9), ‘Under der linden’ (L 39, 11), and ‘Frô Welt’ (L 100, 24),” *Women as Protagonists and Poets in the German Middle Ages: an Anthology of Feminist Approaches to Middle High German Literature*, ed., Albrecht Classen. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 528 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), 59–85; Cyril Edwards, “Hêre Frowe: Case, Number, and Rank in Walther von der Vogelweide’s ‘Lindenlied.’ In Memory of David R. McIntock,” *Modern Language Review* 99 (2004): 94–100; Mary M. Paddock, “Speaking of Spectacle: Another Look at Walther’s ‘Lindenlied,’” *German Quarterly* 77 (2004): 11–28; Brunner, Hahn, et al., *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 8), 106–07; and Albrecht Classen’s contribution to this volume, “Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature: Hartmann von Aue’s ‘Der arme Heinrich,’ Anonymous, ‘Dis ist von dem Heselín,’ Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late Medieval Popular Poetry.”

¹⁷ See Bein, *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 8), 109.

The details here are most realistic and evoke a clear mental image of the scene; she even points out that, in the impression left on the crushed flowers, one can discern where her head pressed into the petals ("Bî den rôsen er wol mac, / tandaradei, / merken, wâ mirz houbet lac" ("In the roses one might indeed notice / tandaradei / where my head lay")). Her poetic language reflects a desire not only to reveal, but also to conceal what has transpired (as she later states explicitly: "wessez iemen / nun welle got), sô schamt ich mich" ["if anyone would find out / (heaven forbid!), I would be really ashamed"]); but she is hiding her pleasure from the condemnation of the court, and definitely *not* from her audience of listeners. Her joy (a function of what the couple could do outside the court in a natural environment) is curbed by her sense of propriety (corresponding to the judgmental gaze of what other humans, such as the courtly retinue, might think). The division of, on the one hand, her textual openness with the audience and, on the other, her desire to conceal the night of love from courtly intrusion and condemnation establishes a close association with the audience, removing Walther's listeners and readers from the courtly sphere of influence and transporting them to a communal, less judgmental perspective, outside the stuffiness of courtly propriety and into the lyrical, blissful and natural ecology with the lovers.

Associated with this natural background is a nightingale, whose song traditionally provides one of the most common medieval, pastoral tropes for nocturnal love.¹⁸ The avian ally of the lovers stands guard over the place where they celebrate their amorous liaison, and sings as long as it is undisturbed—but grows silent and flies off, should some intruder draw near. Thus, its service to the lovers is that of guardian and danger signal. In Walther's "Under der linden," however (wherein its voice, represented as "tandaradei," recurs as the "Waise"-line of each strophe), the nightingale provides something more than its common significance. The young woman identifies all who have witnessed their tryst and know about what transpired: "... er und ich, / und ein kleinez vogellîn" ("... he, and I, and a little birdie"). As a result of this emphatic statement, each being (woman, bird and man) acquires equal status as a fully empowered agent in their communal relationship. Thus, the melodious bird becomes an accomplice in the lovers' secret, a third partner in the fellowship of the clandestine erotic encounter. However, as the woman asserts, their secret is safe, for the little bird can be trusted

¹⁸ Criticism regarding the nightingale in medieval literature is also prodigious; see, for example, Thomas Alan Shippey, "Listening to the Nightingale," *Comparative Literature* 22, (1970): 46–60; Wendy Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature*. American University Studies Series III, *Comparative Literature* 14 (New York: Peter Lang, 1985); and June Hall McCash, "The Swan and the Nightingale: Natural Unity in a Hostile World in the Lais of Marie de France," *French Studies* 49 (1995): 385–96.

not to betray what they did. One might ask, how can she be so sure? The answer is implicit in the final line affirming the nightingale's trustworthiness, "daz mac wol getriuwe sîn" ("that can, after all, be kept secret"). The modal particle "wol" gives the key to her understanding of the matter, one which the audience should grasp as well: as in its previous two usages (describing, first, the many authentic, red-mouth-producing kisses the lovers enjoyed, and second, the tell-tale outline of where her head lay on the flowers during their love-making) it flavors the statement with a sense of "after all" or "of course," which shifts the audience's attention from the pastoral trope's artificiality and onto the actual reality, and the listener/reader will "get" it if she or he just uses common sense. The bird is, in point of fact, a creature of nature, and, of course, behaves just as birds in nature behave. It gradually becomes used to the company of these humans, and when it is calm and senses no danger it instinctively begins to sing. Its song signals an acceptance of the lovers' presence, and their love as an action in harmony with the natural surroundings.

"Heard" from a semiotic perspective, the birdsong becomes a form of language that the lovers understand, an auditory sign that addresses them uniquely. Since Walther places the onomatopoeic "tandaradei" into the mouth of the young woman (it is she, after all, who sings the line that the audience actually hears), he underscores the intimacy the lovers share with their avian companion. Additionally, "tandaradei" echoes throughout each strophe, filling the natural space with the bird's acoustic presence, juxtaposed with numerous visual images associated with the woman and her lover.

Finally, the nightingale's tropic role as the lovers' guardian offers yet another potential for communication that is implicit in observable, instinctive avian behavior: its natural response of ceasing its song and taking flight when alarmed (for example if an intruder enters its surroundings) would alert the lovers to potential discovery, providing another opportunity for intimate communication among the trio. To the ear of the intruder, however, it is highly doubtful that either the bird's silence or its behavior would reveal information about the lovers' activities. Thus, the avian phrase "tandaradei," the intimacy that Walther establishes between the lovers and the nightingale, and the refocusing of attention from a stylized trope to something closer to authentic, natural behavior (aided by the modal particle "wol" in the poem's final line) combine to situate the lovers and their audience into a more realistic and "natural" ecology.¹⁹

¹⁹ By focusing on the performance of the song, Wendy Pfeffer (*The Change of Philomel*, see note 18) shows how the poem brings the medieval audience into the intimate community and natural ecology as well, when she asserts, for example, that "[t]he bird's song, 'Tandaradei,' serves to lighten the mood of the lyric at the same time as it provides a musical accompaniment to the performer's singing" (183).

Additionally, Walther's treatment of other tropes removes nature from the artifice of the pastoral and relocates the lovers' setting in a less stylized and more authentic *locus*. The actual details with which Walther presents the scene recreate for the audience a natural space that serves as a recognizable, verisimilar environment—it is malleable, fragile, and when exploited it can be destroyed ("gebrochen bluomen unde gras"). Although elements of typical pastoral metonymy appear, the metaphors' artistic construction carries them far beyond pastoral conventions, for example, that the broken flowers and grass are merely tropes for the girl's loss of virginity. Instead, Walther forces his audience to examine the scene more closely, to focus on the evidence that presents itself: a human body has lain on the meadow grass, and has left an imprint.

The young woman urges her listeners to look closely at what actually can be seen there ("dâ mugt ir vinden" and "seht"). The indications are so clear, one can even identify the outline of bodies on the meadow's grassy surface ("merken wâ mirz houbet lac"). Grass and flowers are broken, and nature has been changed. Human traces can be detected (for better or for worse), and the presence and activities of humans in nature are causes for which the effects are visually obvious. Here, perhaps more than in most other medieval poems, one can identify the poetic awareness of a human "footprint," impressed upon the natural environment. Although the tone of the poem reflects the lovers' exhilaration and the young woman's playfulness, Walther emphasizes that the natural space beneath the linden tree both is affected by human presence and affects humans when they are present in it.

On the other hand, the poem does little to overcome the typically pastoral opposition between the spaces of culture and rural space, between the court (associated here with the "gaze" that might discover the lovers' rendezvous and condemn their relationship as "illicit") and the blissfully innocent, sublime nocturnal experience of pristine, natural *amour* in the blooming, grassy meadow. Indeed, the young woman insists that she would feel only shame should the rendezvous be discovered by another human being, and the resulting institutional condemnation would inevitably destroy the precious joy that genuine love in these surroundings has afforded her and her lover. Walther ultimately implies that, acting on natural inclinations, the lovers are more "at home" beyond the critical gaze of the court, and their new, secret relationship, including their avian companion, associates them more closely with the natural "other" than with the courtly institution. Although some current ecocritical theories would maintain that there are no fundamental differences between the nature that exists in the castle and the nature which one finds on the meadow,²⁰ Walther's "Under der linden"

²⁰ See Kate Soper, *What is Nature?: Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford, UK, and Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 1995), 15–36.

strongly draws a distinction between the two, and privileges the latter. Thus, it remains on the borderline of pastoral poetry, although it clearly challenges the audience to confront pastoral commonplaces and fosters a kind of proto-ecocritical awareness.

In "Dô der sumer komen was" (L. 94, 11, "When summer arrived"),²¹ Walther further deconstructs his own poetic persona's slippage into the pastoral literary tradition. It is a humorous poem, and as George F. Jones has pointed out, "the song ridicules the convention of visionary verses."²² To accomplish his satirical ends, Walther places himself deeply within a pastoral environment, only as a prelude to its utter demolition. The narrator relates how he sets out on a lovely day in early summer to take a walk in the countryside. The language he employs to describe his surroundings conjures a series of typical, and trivial, pastoral images, perhaps several more than would befit a serious poem on nature: he includes flowers springing forth from the grass, birds chirping, a great meadow, and nearby a clear brook running past a forest, where there is even a nightingale singing. The utter contentment the poet feels as a result of these motifs from the first strophe, however, does not invigorate him to provide more beautiful descriptions or inspire him to express more "sublime" thoughts. Instead, the scene compels him to find a comfortable spot beneath a tree where he can fall asleep and dream²³:

Bî dem brunnen stuont ein boum,
dâ gesach ich einen troum.:
ich was von der sunnen
entwichen zuo dem brunnen,
daz diu linde mære
den küelen schaten bære.
bî dem brunnen ich gesaz,

²¹ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 11), 206–07.

²² George F. Jones, *Walther von der Vogelweide*. Twayne's World Authors Series 46 (New York: Twayne, 1968), 64; see also John A. Asher, "Das Traumglück Walthers von der Vogelweide: zum parodistisch-erotischen Inhalt des Liedes 94,11," *Studien zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hugo Moser zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Werner Besch and Günter Jungbluth (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974), 60–67; S. L. Clark, "Walther von der Vogelweide's Dream Imagery," *The South Central Bulletin* 36 (1976), 138–41; and Alfred Ebenbauer, "Zu Walthers 'Traumglück' (L. 94,11)," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 96 (1977): 370–83.

²³ The "paradisiacal" nature of the dream is pointed out by Brunner, Hahn, et al., *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 8), 86; see also Urban Küsters, "'Waz der troum bediute'": Glückszeichen und Glücksvorstellungen in Walthers Traumballade L. 94, 11," *Walther von der Vogelweide: Beiträge zu Leben und Werk, Günther Schweikle zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans-Dieter Mück (Stuttgart: Stöffler and Schütz, 1989), 341–62.

mîner swære ich vergaz,
schier entslief ich umbe daz.

[At the spring there stood a tree,
There I had a dream—
I got out of the sun
and went over to the spring
that the linden tree
offered me its cool shadow.
Near the spring I sat down
and forgot my worries,
and I soon fell into a deep sleep.]

The dream he experiences becomes a “dream within a dream”: by the second line of the strophe he is already dreaming; the dream situates him among cool shadows near a brook where he can forget his troubles and describe his falling asleep a second time in the strophe’s final line, on a yet deeper level of unconsciousness. Escapism and inactivity dominate almost every predicate, describing the poet’s escaping, forgetting and falling asleep. The artificial, pastoral environment has thus removed the sleeping poet a great distance from the reality of his natural surroundings, rendering him lethargic under the anesthesia that these facile, predictable and trivial natural images create. The poet, perhaps together with his audience (by now also mesmerized by pastoral formulae in profusion) slumbers on, stagnating in an impotence that such static clichés and trivial commonplaces impose. Indeed, things could not be better—in the third strophe Walther claims that “schœner troum enwart nie mê” (“there never was a more beautiful dream”). The poet would gladly remain forever (“Gerne slief ich iemer dâ” [“I would have liked to remain there sleeping eternally”]), but, alas, the natural world will not have it that way.

In the fourth strophe, nature, via the cawing of an annoying crow, stirs the sleeping poet from his deep reveries and forces him to return to reality.

. . . wan ein unsæligiu krâ,
diu begonde schrien.
daz alle krâ gedien
als ich in des gunne!
si nam mir michel wunne.
von ir schrien ich erschrac,
wan daz dâ niht steines lac,
sô wære ez ir suontac.

[. . . but an unholy crow
began to screech.
I hope that all crows get the comeuppance
that I wish for this one!]

It took all my joy away.
 I was startled [awake] by its screech:
 but if a stone had been lying there,
 so it would have been its Judgment Day.]

In contrast to the sweet, melodious song of the nightingale, the crow's intrusive shrieking incites the human's anger; although his first inclination is to punish the bird with a well-aimed stone, he cannot find a fitting projectile, and therefore must endure the dream-shattering racket. Thus the poet, who at first painted for his audience a sublimely natural landscape and filled it with numerous, innocuous, and artificial images of the pastoral, discovers he is powerless against a genuine bird's intrusive clamoring.

However, in this confrontation we gain a valuable insight into one aspect of the relationship between art and nature; through the crow's seemingly mocking cackle, the audience becomes aware of the poet's limitations, or indeed, even of his final impotence. Unlike the earlier poetic artifices, the crow possesses flesh-and-blood reality, and its caw resounds through the fourth strophe not as a trope or contrived adornment to the poet's reverie, but as the triumphant, unassailable *vox naturae*, taunting the frustrated poet, destroying his illusions and dreams, and thus shattering the artificial calm permeating the manufactured environment of his reverie. "Real" nature is not purely sublime and beautiful, nor one-sidedly calm and innocuous; a complete image of nature includes elements that, from a human perspective, might be considered ugly and annoying (like the crow's shriek), but which even Walther is powerless to eliminate from his poem if he reports honestly what he finds around him.²⁴

In the final strophe, he encounters a "remarkable old woman" of the forest, a figure that reminds one of the personification of nature as a deity,²⁵ who speaks confusingly of things the poet knows little, but longs to understand more.

Wan ein wunderaltez wîp
 diu getrôste mir den lîp.
 die begond ich eiden,
 nû hât sie mir bescheiden
 waz der troum bediute.
 daz hoeret, lieben liute:

²⁴ Some two centuries later, Oswald von Wolkenstein similarly laments some harsh sounds of nature, such as the springtime roaring of a mountain creek, and the deleterious effects of such natural racket, in his "Durch Barbarei, Arabia," Kl. 44; see Albrecht Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein: An English Translation of the Complete Works (1376/77–1445)*. The New Middle Ages (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 126–28. I am grateful that Prof. Classen pointed out this parallel to me.

²⁵ See George Economou, *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

zwên und einer, daz sint drî:
dannoch seite si mir dâ bî,
daz mîn dûme ein vinger sî.

[Then a marvelously old woman
comforted me:
I began to entreat her,
now she should explain
what the dream might mean.
So mark this well, dear people:
Two plus one, well, that makes three:
what's more, since she'd gone that far,
that my thumb is nothing but a finger.]

Walther's common personification of nature as the goddess “natura,” or “mother nature,” seems to return to the realm of pastoral trope, but with a twist. The woman is not sublimely beautiful, as, for example, the commonplace would present her²⁶; rather, she is an old woman, who, like nature itself, seems ancient and, perhaps, like the crow, more metaphorically “true” than any part of the previous pastoral depictions. She presents the poet with the “wisdom” of the obvious, perhaps mocking him for his belief that the conjurations of his pastoral dream were somehow more significant than the reality confronting him in the flesh-and-blood crow. The poet admits that what she says is mysterious to him, but he struggles to understand her.

The remainder of the strophe smacks of satire, but the target poses some difficulty for the modern interpreter.²⁷ Her first assertion, that one plus two equals three, is a fact of elementary mathematics, and obtains universal validity in nature. The apparent reference to the Trinity here seems to imply a slightly veiled criticism of a theologically instrumental view of the natural world, that nature reveals God to humanity: thus, according to mother nature, any idea that “three is equal to one,” and, by extension, other religious dogma, must come from another source than her realm. Her second proposal, that the poet's thumb is a finger, speaks perhaps to the arrogant human assumption of superiority to all creatures of nature, since the opposing thumb sets humans apart from all other species that might be found in the forests and wild areas of the European Middle

²⁶ George Economou, *The Goddess Natura* (see note 25), 105 reports Jean de Meun's treatment of the goddess in his *Roman de la Rose*: “Invoking the inexpressibility topos, Jean refuses to describe Natura, for since she is entirely the work of God, her beauty exceeds the power of expression.”

²⁷ See, for example, John A. Asher, “Das ‘Traumglück’ Walthers von der Vogelweide: zum parodistisch-erotischen Inhalt des Liedes 94,11,” *Studien zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hugo Moser zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Werner Besch (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1974), 60–68; and Guntram Haag, *Traum und Traumdeutung in mittelhochdeutscher Literatur: theoretische Grundlagen und Fallstudien*. Germanistik (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 2003), 111–202.

Ages. Yet, when one examines a thumb, one actually finds little to distinguish it from the other fingers of the hand, perhaps just as a human being, when in the forest ecology, is like the other animals that one finds there. Thus, Walther may be using the *natura* trope in an unusual, satirical manner, certainly not by sketching a conventional forest “wîp” of idealized youth and beauty, but rather a “wunderaltez wîp,” a bit grotesque and difficult, but humorously so, possibly deconstructing the common figure one usually would expect in this context. Indeed, as Gibbs and Johnson point out, “it is very much Walther’s unique contribution to play with the conventions which he appears to be overthrowing.”²⁸

While each of these two examples has displayed Walther’s capacity to deviate from and even to reject typically pastoral formulae, we have also seen that he is completely capable of working within the pastoral tradition. One important example of this comes to the foreground in one of Walther’s best-known poems, the “Reichston” (L. 8,4 “Song of the Empire”).²⁹ The poem consists of three strophes, the first of which establishes an atmosphere of philosophical brooding, and expresses Walther’s bitter political complaint: contemporary society is completely out of balance, and the poet considers it impossible to reconcile the demands of honor, possessions and service to God within the current political environment.³⁰

At the beginning of the second verse, Walther shifts his setting to the natural world, where he finds an arena in which interactions between creatures provide metaphorical parallels to those of humans. First, he presents nature as an acoustic

²⁸ Marion E. Gibbs and Sidney M. Johnson, ed., *Medieval German Literature: A Companion*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1774 (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 275.

²⁹ This popular poem is also commonly associated with the image, evoked in its first line, of the poet in a natural setting, perched contemplatively on a rock: “Ich saz ûf eime steine;” Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 11), 11–13; among the profusion of critical commentaries on these three *Sprüche*, the following bear particular relevance: Horst Wenzel, “Melancholie und Inspiration: Walther von der Vogelweide L. 8,4ff. Zur Entwicklung des europäischen Dichterbildes,” *Walther von der Vogelweide: Beiträge zu Leben und Werk* (see note 23), 133–53; Peter Kern, “Der Reichston – Das erste politische Lied Walthers von der Vogelweide?” *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 111 (1992), 344–62. See also Haiko Wandhoff, “swaz fliuzeet oder fliuget oder bein zer erde biuget’. Konkurrierende Naturkonzeptionen im Reichston Walthers von der Vogelweide,” *Natur im Mittelalter: Konzepte – Erfahrungen – Wirkungen: Akten des 9. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes, Marburg, 14.–17. März 2001*, ed. Peter Dill (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), 360–372.

³⁰ Ulrich Müller offers a detailed commentary on various modern theories regarding the historical figures and events to which Walther may be referring in his “Reichston” in Brunner, Hahn, et al., *Walther von der Vogelweide*, (see note 8), 144–50, and the great majority of studies on this poem have dealt with political themes in the poem’s three strophes; however, one study of particular interest to the current discussion is Theo Schumacher, “Walthers zweiter Spruch im Reichston,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 36 (1962): 179–89.

image through the sound of rushing water, which sets in place a natural background. Onto this canvas he layers and develops several visual images, maintaining a first-person perspective as subject and observer, repeating "I saw" three times before making any further, subjective comment about human beings and culture:

Ich *hôrte* ein wazzer diezen
unde *sach* die vische vliezen,
ich *sach*, swaz in der welte was,
velt, walt, loup, rôr unde gras.
Swaz kriuchet unde vliuget
und bein zer erden biuget,
daz *sach* ich, unde sag iu daz . . .

[I *heard* the water rushing
and *saw* the fish swimming;
I *saw* whatever there was to see in the world,
field, forest, treetops, stalks and grass.
Whatever swims and flies
and bends a leg to the ground,
all that I *saw*, and I tell you . . . (emphasis my own)]

Walther thus encourages his audience to enter into the environment of the "Reichston" through sound, and then to focus visually on a more specific image and action, that of fish darting about. However, the fish and their motion are generic, and their non-specificity does not invite the reader to form a particularly sharp image. The reader is not in the realm of nature where detail is important, but rather where one perceives, as the poet states in the third line, "swaz in der werlte was," all material nature synchronically: an idealized, pastoral nature, and one which inspires in the reader a feeling of immense size and grandeur. In the fourth and fifth lines he continues this process of focusing the reader's attention on generalized objects, employing floral images and proceeding from the large and ambient (the field and forest) through the more specific (the foliage) and finally to the smallest and most proximate (the reed and the grass).

Walther's strophe renders the totality of the world as a sum of its vegetative parts, particularly through his reiteration of the indefinite pronoun "swaz." His compositional pattern and consciously ordered series of images, from largest to smallest, impress the audience with the vastness of creation, the forest and the field, which the poet holds in his mind's eye: it is a sublime scene, one of great majesty and authority. Similarly, he represents all fauna through synecdoche, employing verbs of locomotion to represent the beasts of the water, the sky and the land respectively. Hence, Walther speaks with the authority of one who has seen all of creation, from the greatest to the least, and can state the truth out of such authority, that all creatures have a place in a hierarchy, and that there is

always one member of a group who dominates. Of course, his human reference is an Emperor, who should exercise leadership over all subjects in the Empire. In one sense, the awe-inspiring authority and majesty in the environment have been transferred, via Walther's rhetorical skills, from sublime nature to the realm of human politics. The pastoral tropes, here in the service of Walther's political aim (to support one candidate for Holy Roman Emperor over another) remain true to the pastoral tradition: they reflect an allegorical and stylized exploitation of nature imagery in the service of a human goal. Nevertheless, the "Reichston" provides a unique and masterful execution of such a manipulation that surely impresses and most likely thoroughly convinces the audience of the correctness of the poet's opinion on this matter.

For many medieval German poets, including Walther, the four seasons provide the most concrete and immediate signs of temporal changes in the natural world. In fact, in several poems, Walther presents the seasons as the central thematic focus, causing the poet great contentment or significant distress. He offers perhaps the clearest example of his "seasonal affects" in his poem, "Diu werlt was gelf, rô unde blâ" (L. 75, 25, "The world was yellow, red and blue").³¹ On a basic level it expresses the poet's frustration with the high level of discomfort and seemingly endless duration of winter weather in a droll manner. By means of acoustic and rhetorical devices, striking and unusual comparisons and profuse visual imagery, especially color, Walther establishes a complex and intimate relationship with the natural world, situating himself in its midst, while fashioning a light and humorous, lyrical tone. As in few other German lyrics of the period, these verses are a concretization of their ecological subject: they are clearly meant to be "felt" as well as read.

Walther anchors the acoustic structure of the poem in a monorhyme in each of the five, eight-lined strophes.³² The recurring uniformity of sound at the end of each line imposes monotony, literally and figuratively, on the poem, creating a tonal environment of unrelenting tedium, paralleling the poet's attitude toward the overlong winter bleakness. Furthermore, the five rhymes broadly represent the vocalic possibilities in each region of the mouth: respectively, the rhyming vowels of each verse consist of a midrange vowel (represented by <â>), a low front vowel (represented by <ê>), a high front vowel (represented by <î>), a low back vowel (represented by <ô>) and, finally, a high back vowel (represented by <û>); all of the rhyming vowels are marked as long. Thus, the vowels' range and length suggest

³¹ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 11), 169–70.

³² See George F. Jones, *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 22), 65–66; although he pays some attention to this poem's acoustic structure, Jones maintains that it is nothing more than a "trivial ditty" by which Walther can show his skills at dashing off a tune.

the ubiquitousness and seemingly eternal duration of winter's sting, while their repetitiveness eloquently conveys the author's boredom with his monotonic natural winter environment. Of course, Walther firmly establishes the poem's humorous atmosphere through these exaggerated vocalic repetitions, evoking mirth via the relentless, acoustic hyperbole in each strophe.

The poem begins with a contrast between the bleakness of the present natural surroundings and an imagined, lovely summer that is long past.

Diu werlt was gelf, rôet unde blâ,
grüene in dem walde und anderswâ,
die cleine vogelesungen dâ.
nû schriet aber diu nebelcrâ.
phligt sî iht ander varwe? jâ:
sist worden bleich und übergrâ.
des rimpfet sich vil menic brâ.

[The world was yellow, red and blue,
green in the forest and elsewhere
Little birds sang there.
Now the hooded crow cries out.
Does (the world) now have other colors? Yes, indeed:
It has grown pale and overly gray.
And many a brow has become wrinkled because of that.]

Here, the orientation of the pastoral as a nostalgic recollection of beautiful, irretrievable experience becomes most important.³³ The images that emerge in the first few lines present an utopian memory of the summer season, for which the poet ardently longs in the poem's present time, and as often occurs with remembered events, things and people, their "objectiveness" becomes less significant than their idealized qualities. Pure color dominates Walther's recollection of the landscape, although objects to which the colors can attach are lacking. Thus, the poet recalls the red, the yellow and the blue of the summer world ("Diu werlt was gelf, rôet unde blâ"), but does not yet identify precisely *what* in the environment is so colorful. Like an artist brushing paint onto a canvas, Walther lays out his hues in splashes before blending and forming the colors into recognizable objects.

Of course, one expects a green shade in natural surroundings, and Walther provides this color in the second line; however, he then curiously completes the line by juxtaposing two adverbs of place ("in dem walde" and "anderswâ"). One can scarcely imagine a more unspecific *locus* than this: the green is located not only "in" the summertime forest, but also "elsewhere"; the offhandedness of Walther's

³³ Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (see note 6), 37.

word choice initiates the poem's semi-serious tone while it further detaches the green from the world of objects. Indeed, even the forest, which one imagines as a real space consisting of individual deciduous and coniferous trees in abundance, does not bear the color; instead, the forest merely provides a space *in* which the color exists. Thus, in the first two lines of this poem, summer color is everywhere, but, disassociated from the objective world, it remains a disembodied impression that lingers indistinctly in the memory.

In the third line Walther begins to populate the spatial image in his memory with the first of several objects that he will add to his recalled summertime landscape over the course of the poem. Like Walther's colors, the objects, too, seem more idealized than real, and certainly are drawn from the storehouse of prefabricated, pastoral images. The first of these are little birds; predictably, the poet recalls that they were singing. The audience does not discover, however, whether Walther is referring to sparrows, nightingales, larks, warblers or other songbirds that one encounters among the European fauna.³⁴ The poet's memory offers no more specific information than that there were small birds somewhere in the image ('dâ') and that they sang. However, the suggestion of generic birdsong produces only a hazy recollection of joy, centered in the poet, that does not provide more specificity or concreteness for the reader. Of course, such an exclusively anthropocentric perspective is inherent in the pastoral, where the poet indulges in the sublime enjoyment, for her or his own pleasure, provided by a recollected, generic image of contrived natural beauty that requires few details. As a result, the audience must make do with a very vague picture of the summer landscape.

However, the pastoral image evaporates completely when it confronts the reality of the wintertime. The warm colors and avian melodies disappear in the fourth line, when the verb tense shifts from the (remembered) past to the (authentic) present, marked by the temporal adverb "nû" ("now"). Suddenly, the poet encounters a creature that incorporates the opposite of that which he has presented in the first three lines. As in the previously discussed poem, "Dô der sumer komen was," a crow interrupts Walther's reverie. The indistinct memory of birdsong is shattered by the harsh cry of a "nebelcrâ" (*corvus cornix*, a "Nebelkrähe" or "hooded crow"). The specificity with which the poet names the species conjures a concrete, visual and acoustic image in contrast to the hazy memories of summertime. Yet, the crow's name itself presents an ironic juxtaposition of vagueness ("nebel," Eng. "fog" or "haze") with concreteness ("krâ," Eng. "crow"), embodying Walther's vain attempt to recall a more authentic

³⁴ When Walther names specific avian species, the identification often carries great significance; see, for example, Stephen L. Wailes, "The Crane, the Peacock, and the Reading of Walther von der Vogelweide 19.29," *Modern Language Notes* 88 (1973): 947–55.

summer experience in the face of winter. Devoid of any colors, shrieking out its "song" into the snowy and cold winter environment, the drab crow thus becomes more than a denizen of the winter landscape: it presents a kind of *Dingsymbol* of Walther's dilemma, ironically incorporating, through color symbolism, the poet's utter discontent with the long and tedious season and his helplessness to call back summertime.

As Walther further develops the contrasts between the memory of summer pleasures and the current discomfort of winter, the dominant background color changes to an ubiquitous, pale grayness that characterizes the winter cold. The poem's tone changes as well, to one of frustration and exasperation, while objects become much more concrete and tactile as past memory fades into present reality. By the beginning of the second strophe the scene returns to summer past, but again the poet's memory conjures nothing more solid and specific than a green hill, flowers, clover and a distant lake, all of which rapidly dissolve—as the poet sadly asserts, "der ougenweide ist dô niht mê" ("there is no more scenery there"). The alternating between recalled, indistinct summer memories and the monotonic, cold and concrete present moves the poem relentlessly deeper into an almost sarcastic flippancy.

The third strophe claims that only fools would say "snîa snî!" ("let it snow, snow!") while the poor people suffer so much. The winter makes the poet feel "swær" ("heavy") with worries, that would disappear if only the summer would come back. Beginning the fourth stanza, the poet claims that, rather than endure much more of this weather, he would rather eat raw crustaceans ("den crebz wolte ich ê ezzen rô"); since hooded crows make such "crebz," or "crayfish," a significant part of their diet, it is likely that the inspiration for this image comes from the poet's direct observation of the "nebelcrâ" earlier in the poem. Additionally, through this food image, Walther forges a humorous identity with the crow, parallel to (but, in tone, quite different from) the young woman's identification with the nightingale, previously discussed in "Under der linden." Thereafter, the focus shifts once again onto images of summer, but these, too, are indistinct and hazy: the summer provided flowers, a meadow and bushes that made his heart happy then, but now the winter has replaced the elements of the vernal landscape with the straw he finds emerging from the snow around him.

In the fifth stanza he blames the overlong winter for his disheveled appearance and for his feeling "verlegen als ein sū" ("lazy as a sow"), another faunal image more concrete than that of the generically remembered, pastoral birds. By the end of the poem the poet's exasperation and sarcasm reach a zenith, as the final two lines provide an amusing closing *pointe*: that the poet would rather become a

"monk in Dobrilugk" ("munich ze Toberlû")³⁵ than endure more of winter's discomfort. For Walther, who closely observes and celebrates the secular world of the court as well as the natural environment, even the deprivation and rigors of monastic life seem a desirable alternative to winter. However, the reader feels compelled to take this one step further: it seems likely that, since Walther measures the bemoaned discomforts of the season against the monastic life "ze Toberlû" (as a yardstick that defines an ultimate "place where one would not want to be"), he gains a humorous opportunity to criticize cloistered existence as an unpleasant place, a "*locus terribilis*," or, in other words, a polar opposite of the summertime pastoral *locus amoenus* evoked earlier in the poem.³⁶ By the end of the final strophe Walther convinces us not only that the long winter is possibly the most uncomfortable situation one must endure in life, but also that it is not all that much worse than to be "beclemmet" ("shut in") behind monastic walls.

Each strophe of this poem thus presents a stark contrast between the representation of idealized nature in the poet's memory and that of his present ecological reality, between the imagined landscape of pastoral artifice and the authentic challenges medieval life posed, especially to human beings confronting raw and merciless nature. The phenomenal medieval world was indeed one of extreme harshness, and the pastoral storehouse of ready poetic images created a prettified but unreal landscape, providing a backdrop and, perhaps, a refuge from this harshness for many a medieval poet. However, in Walther's "Diu werlt was gelf, rôt unde blâ" we receive a most accomplished artist's insight into how ineffective pastoral tropes may prove to be, recalled through hazy memory, in the face of stark, natural images from the real and intolerable discomforts of winter.

One of Walther's final *Lieder* and perhaps one of his best known poems after "Under der linden" is "Owê, war sint verschwunden alliu mîniu jâr" (L. 124, 1, "Alas, where have all my years disappeared").³⁷ Often referred to as his "Elegie," the three-strophe poem laments the poet's perception that the world has

³⁵ The locale "Toberlû" has drawn attention from both literary critics and "Heimat"-geographers; see for example Michael Lindner, "Prolog: Walther von der Vogelweide und das Land hinter der Elbe," *Akkulturation und Selbstbehauptung: Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lande zwischen Elbe/Saale und Oder im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Eberhard Holtz, Michael Lindner, and Peter Moraw. *Berichte und Abhandlungen, Sonderband 6* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 7–11; and Manfred Lemmer, "Münch ze Toberlû: Anmerkungen zu Walther L 76, 21," *Röllwagenbüchlein: Festschrift für Walter Röll zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Jürgen Jaehrling, Uwe Meves, and Erika Timm (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002), 43–49.

³⁶ See Gabriele Fitschen, *Der Körper in der Lyrik Walthers von der Vogelweide: Sprachliche Darstellung und semantische Funktion*. *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik*, 740 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2008), 194–98.

³⁷ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 11), 264–66.

degenerated before his very eyes, until it now seems to languish in a sorry state.³⁸ His years are lost, and life seems to be dreamlike—as if the poet had slept his time away while the world changed, to the point where it has become unrecognizable. Key to this realization are longtime friends, such as his childhood playmates from long ago, who have lost their familiarity and now strike him as elderly and feeble strangers. Most significantly for the environmental theme, however, are Walther’s lamentations regarding the physical world itself, which has also become remarkably foreign, even uncanny to him.

Walther brings up the natural environment three times in the three verses. In the first strophe, he makes what becomes perhaps one of the most significant expressions of an ecocritical consciousness to be found in medieval German literature. He states:

bereitet ist daz velt, verhouwen ist der walt.
wan daz daz wazzer fliuze als ez wilent vlöz,
für wâr, ich wânde, mîn ungelücke wurde gröz.

[the field is ploughed up, cut down is the forest:
and if the water didn’t flow as it has always flowed,
my unhappiness would certainly become great.]

In the first of these lines he expresses his regret that the land has now been cultivated, and the trees of the forest have been felled. As in previous poems, the totality of Walther’s natural landscape is “velt” (“field”) and “walt” (“forest”). While the activity of farming, a warm-weather occupation, has caused him joy in earlier contexts, now the striking parallel of “bereitet” (“cultivated”) and “verhouwen” (“cleared,” “cut down”) emphasizes the extreme effect cultivation of the land has had on the once familiar (and, we must assume, pristine) landscape. The poet’s alienated, “upside-down” sense of the environment in the first line is made even more emphatic by means of the inversion (the predicate

³⁸ The great number of recent critical commentaries on this poem include Bernd Thum, “Die sogenannte ‘Alterselegie’ Walthers von der Vogelweide und die Krise des Landesausbaus im 13. Jahrhundert unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Donau-Raumes,” *Literatur – Publikum – historischer Kontext*, ed. Gert Kaiser. Beiträge zur älteren deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 1 (Bern, Las Vegas, et al.: Peter Lang, 1977), 205–39; Berndt Volkmann, *Owê war sint verswunden: die “Elegie” Walthers von der Vogelweide: Untersuchungen, kritischer Text, Kommentar*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 483 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1987); Mark Chinca, “Walther von der Vogelweide: ‘Elegie,’” *Landmarks in German Poetry*, ed. Peter Hutchinson. Britische und irische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 20 (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 9–30; Brunner, Hahn et al., *Walther von der Vogelweide* (see note 8), 222–27; Albrecht Classen, “Crime and Violence in the Middle Ages: The Cases of Heinrich der Glichezare’s Reinhard Fuchs and Werner der Gartenære’s Helmbrecht,” *Crime, Criminality, and Punishment in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Connie Scarborough. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 10 (Berlin: DeGruyter, forthcoming).

adjective occurring first, followed by the verb “to be” and finally by the substantive) structuring each half-line.

Clearly, within the context of negative change that this poem laments, the human footprint on the natural world has been a major cause of the poet’s estrangement from it, a symptom of a modern turning away from innocence and connection, and a moving toward unsettledness and dissatisfaction, primary factors causing the poet to cry out at both the beginning and end of each strophe “alas!” (“Owê” or “ouwê”). The poet then declares that, if the waters flowed in other channels than was their custom, his unhappiness would indeed be great. Of course, the mass redirection and restriction of meandering streambeds and the engineering of artificial rivers had not yet become a technological possibility,³⁹ even though these words ring prophetically into the modern era, in which damming, floodplain manipulation and the drastic reduction of watershed have had dire effects on modern ecosystems, to the “ungelücke” of our contemporary world. Here, Walther gives us a strong taste of the alienating effects that ecological change can exert on the human psyche.

The second strophe laments some of the unfortunate directions cultural phenomena have taken, causing care and unhappiness among people who otherwise should be lighthearted and joyful, including the young. Grumpily, the poet complains that women’s fashion is unsightly, knights dress inappropriately, and the Pope is sending unfriendly letters from Rome. Again, Walther reaches into the environment to indicate how the entire world, both culture and nature, have become pitiable, for even the birds now join in the lamentations:

die wilden vogellîn betrüebet unser clage:
waz wonders ist, ob ich dâ von verzage?

[our lament saddens the birds in the wilderness:
is it any wonder, then, that I have given up on any joy at all?]

Under better circumstances, our avian companions in the natural world would undoubtedly be singing happily in a forest, as in other poems where Walther employs the image of “vogel” (“birds”). However, this time Walther is not evoking the typical pastoral trope of birds, nor does he situate them in a pastoral “walt.” Instead, the birds are “die wilden vogellîn” and can be found in the “wilde,” with its medieval connotations of estrangement from the courtly world. Their usually cheerful melodies have ceased, while human complaints now affect the birds, making them sad.

³⁹ Jeremy Withers remarks, however, that medieval armies had developed some technical skills in this area, since “rivers were dammed and rerouted to create obstacles for advancing troops,” see “The Ecology of Late Medieval Warfare in Lydgate’s *Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep*” (see note 7),” 104.

Apparently the poet can detect this change, either in the birds’ silence or perhaps in a new, sadder song, and this realization causes him to despair that joy will ever return. Remarkably, the single line in this stanza regarding nature makes a powerful impact on the reader, and makes it unambiguously clear that destructive human activities affect the natural ecology negatively, causing a loss of human connection to the natural world that diminishes human joy. Walther traces a downward spiral that somewhat parallels more modern models of the often negative relationship between human culture and nature. It is striking that Walther seems to sense the irretrievability of the ties that bind us to nature, and the dire implications of this loss.

At the outset of the third strophe Walther shifts his attention from secular to religious concerns, reminding the reader that as beautiful as the world might seem, it is tarnished. Walther’s nature images begin to acquire biblical overtones: the sweetness of the natural world is concretely likened to that of honey, but it has been contaminated with gall, recalling the wine that had been mixed with gall and given to Christ on the cross to drink (Matthew 27:34). Then, Walther returns to a favorite depiction of nature’s external beauty, through its colors, “white, green and red”:

diu welt ist ûzen schœne, wîz grûen und rôt,
und innan swarzer varwe, vinster sam der tût.

[The world is beautiful on the outside, white, green and red,
but inside it is black in color, as dark as death itself.]

Again, one detects traces of biblical language, particularly Christ’s description of the Pharisees, comparing them to “whited sepulchers” (Matthew 23:27), white on the outside but actually full of death and decay on the inside. Such language marks another trend in “Owê, war sint verschwunden alliu mîniu jâr,” moving the poet’s field of vision away from natural ecology and toward a blissful, divine space. Indeed, the poem ends with a *memento mori*, as the poet issues a call for knights to participate in a crusade, as he invites them to look forward to earning the “crône” (“crown”) of eternal life in a heavenly environment, no longer obligated to suffer the bitterness of existence in a world-turned-upside-down.

In the meantime, the discourse conveying tropes of the natural world reflects a most striking transformation, especially if one recalls the praises of the remembered summer landscape that Walther sang previously (e.g., in “Diu werlt was gelf, rôt unde blâ”). The summertime hues indicating life, in full force, adorning the vernal environment of earlier poems now mask the putrefaction of nature, which Walther also depicts in reference to color. At the same time, Walther’s revelation here presents an additional concrete and realistic feature of the biosphere. Although the phrase “innan swarzer varwe” functions as a religious trope, the fact remains that death and decay are as much part of an authentic

natural experience as nature's beautiful green and red hues. Therefore, drawing the reader's focus onto nature's "unsightly" side marks a distinct shift toward realism. At least on the ecocritical level, Walther has left behind the idyllic, sublime splendor of the pastoral for a more realistic perspective on the space around him. However, this does not last long; instead of lingering on a more authentic, but less idealistic, natural environment, he redirects his view toward a beautiful and perfect afterlife in heaven. By the conclusion of the poem he has completely embraced a vision of eternal glory, claiming it is better that knights participate in a crusade and thereby gain a place in heaven than that they remain in the intolerable *status quo* he laments in the previous two verses.

Thus, as we have seen, Walther's poetry develops a new discourse of the natural world that, in several of his best-known poems, challenges the dominant, privileged pastoral discourse common in medieval art, and reflects a nascent "ecocritical" consciousness. While in some poems Walther engages fully in stereotypical pastoral treatments of nature (e.g., "Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent"), in others he adopts an ironic tone toward these images and breaks through the simple acceptance of their formulaic references, as he focuses on individual natural phenomena in a contrastive and more realistic light. In several of the poems we have examined, Walther creates a scenario where a human, lyrical subject enters a natural environment and discovers that pastoral discourse is insufficient to relate her or him to ecological reality.

In other poems, facile and idealized pastoral tropes evaporate when the poet focuses on authentic visual and acoustic images of the natural world. This process enables Walther to place his readers in a perspective that allows them uniquely to observe the results of actual human incursion into the natural ecology, even to the point where the poet can question the thoughtless exploitation of the environment and challenge the seemingly innocuous literary conventions that encourage such thoughtlessness. In these poems, the poet cannot look upon nature as a perpetual subject that is observing a sublime object; one usually finds oneself in the thick of authentic natural things, perhaps awakened from a pastoral reverie by a crow's shriek, or possibly shaken by the sudden awareness that summer's pretty colors mask the very real and ubiquitous blackness of corruption and decay. Or, one can discover evidence of one's own impression in the broken grass stalks and flowers, forming the outline of a human body upon the floral forest carpet. Thus, some of Walther's most important contributions to medieval environmental consciousness lie in his mimetic attempts to depict the natural world in some "naturalistic" detail, rather than as a sum of common, stylized and trivial metaphors, and to situate the lyrical subject into a meaningful and authentic perspective on itself within that ecological space.

Chapter 4

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Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*, Anonymous, "Dis ist von dem Heselin," Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late-Medieval Popular Poetry¹

Most of medieval literature was written by and for members of the courts. We are really dealing with aristocratic literature, in which traditional ethics and ideals find vocal expression. As James A. Schultz observes, "Courtly love is a product of this moderation and regulation. . . . As table manners discipline the appetite for food, and the tournament disciplines the knights' compulsion to fight, so courtly love disciplines the tendency of men and women to fall in love and their urge to consummate that love physically. It does so in the name of the same standards to which courtly culture in general is held."² Courtly romances and courtly poetry, along with didactic texts and also numerous chronicles elaborated on and cemented the fundamental concept characterizing that world in which feudalism had created rather strict barriers between the three social classes.³ Peasants were

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Christopher R. Clason (Oakland University, MI) for his helpful comments on this paper.

² James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 160.

³ The relevant literature on this topic is legion, but for a representative selection of current scholarly approaches, see the contributions to *Courtly Arts and the Art of Courtliness: Selected Papers from the*

supposed to work on their farms and create the necessary produce; clerics were supposed to pray for all Christians and provide the necessary religious service; knights were supposed to fight and defend their society.

Each member of those three classes, at least in ideal terms, gave something and received something back (everyone received food from the peasants, protection from the knights, and prayers from the priests), which generally speaking achieved a harmonious balance that satisfied the needs and desires of every individual in that world according to a social contract (contractual society). This trifunctional structure of medieval society, which also could be expanded to include a fourth estate during the late Middle Ages (merchants, or burghers), has long been recognized as the essential framework by countless historians, supreme among them Georges Dumézil, whom Georges Duby closely followed in his historical analyses, and Duby's fellow annalist, Marc Bloch. Duby cites, for instance, the famous formula characterizing that fundamental structure of premodern European society: "orare, pugnare, agricolari-laborare" (pray, fight, labor).⁴

One of countless medieval commentators about that social structure can suffice here to confirm this observation, underscoring the profound relevance of this trifunctionality. Christine de Pizan, in her *Livre de la Paix*, composed between 1412 and 1414, identified one of the key components in the character of a good prince who knows how to protect peace and to defend his country in time of need.⁵ The prince is critically responsible for the harmony of among the social classes, and thus, ideally, should treat them with humility and kindness, pay respect to everyone according to his or her status, and maintain that social structure through his leadership role:

la premiere est de haultece de tres nobles princes d'un meismes sang de la lignee royal, la seconde est de vaillant chevalerie et estat des nobles, la tierce de solonnel clergié en plusieurs universelz estudes et par especial a Paris, la quarte en notable et riche bourgeoisie en maintes citez et par especial en ceste . . . C'est assavoir le chief qui est le roy, les espaules et parties haultes qui representent les princes et seigneurs, les bras qui est la chevalerie, les flans qui est le clergié, les reins et ventre qui sont les

Eleventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 29 July–4 August 2004, ed. Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006).

⁴ Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*. Trans. by Arthur Goldhammer. with a Foreword by Thomas N. Bisson (1978; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), cites Gerard de Cambrais, 13. See also his *The Chivalrous Society*. Trans. by Cynthia Postan (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). For a survey of the critical literature, see now Harry Kitsikopoulos, "Social and Economic Theory in Medieval Studies," *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1270–92.

⁵ See the contributions to *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages 1200–1500*, ed. István P. Bejczy and Cary J. Nederman. Disputatio, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

bourgeois, les cuisses qui sont les marchans, les jambes et piéz qui sont le menu peuple.⁶

[the first is the high dignity of its princes, who all share the blood of the royal line; the second is the valiant knighthood and estate of the nobility; the third is the distinguished clergy, active in all kinds of scholarship, especially in Paris; the fourth, the worthy and rich burghers in many cities, especially in this one. . . . The head that is the king, the shoulders and upper parts that represent the princes and lords, the arms that are the knights, the sides that are the clergy, the loins and belly that are the burghers, the thighs that are the merchants, the legs and feet that are the people.⁷]

At the same time, although she might not say so explicitly enough for our taste, these ‘people’ are for her nothing but those who live in the countryside, on farms and in villages, hence the peasants. The greatest danger for society would arise if those low-level people would be granted political power, influence, and authority: “noblece y est en grant vilté, bien y est menacee, tout sera mis a mort, plus n’en souffreront. Adont sont si aisés quant ilz tuent ou massacrent gent, rompent coffres, ro bent tout, effoucent vin a ses riches gens” (273; “Nobility is despised, property is menaced, all will be killed. They have put up with enough: so they quite happily kill people, break open chests, pillage everything, and breach the wine casks of those rich people,” 142).

Throughout the entire Middle Ages, however, the relationship among these social classes, or estates, was far from balanced, and overall peasants had a much harder life than all the other groups by virtually any factor we might adduce. We constantly hear voices that express contempt for the peasants or enjoin them to keep the class demarcations in mind, to dress and eat more humbly, and simply to defer more to the nobility out of reverence for the God-given social order. Of course, the primary purpose of Christine’s treatise was to teach princes how to serve their countries properly and how to maintain social peace, but we still notice the virtual absence of the peasant class in her ruminations because the upper classes were simply entitled, if not charged with, to keep it under control.⁸

Since this paper will focus on medieval German voices, it seems most reasonable to support our general claim also with the reference to an important and highly

⁶ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Peace*, ed., trans., and with an introduction and commentary by Karen Green, Constant J. Mews, Janice Pinder, and Tania Van Hemelryck with the assistance of Alan Crosier. Penn State Romance Studies (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), Book 3, vi, 265–66.

⁷ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Peace*, 134 (see note 6).

⁸ For the critical concern regarding how to maintain social control, see the contributions to *Social Control in Europe*. Vol. 1: 1500–1800, ed. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2004). See also the collection of articles: *The Civilization of Crime: Violence in Town and Country Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Eric A. Johnson and Eric H. Monkkonen (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

influential social critic and didactic writer, Hugo von Trimberg (ca. 1230–after 1313). In his *Renner* (ca. 25,000 verses, seventy-two manuscripts and one early print edition), in which he discusses the wide spectrum of social classes, public behavior, ethics, and morality, he also comments about the peasants. He sets up a fictional scene in which the narrator arrives in a village where one person immediately approaches him and inquires about the social inequality between them and the nobles. At first the narrator refuses to respond, and only when he is surrounded by a group of drunken farmers does he finally consent to explain the origin of the social structure, referring, above all, to Adam, then to Noah and his three sons, two of whom developed into noble and free people, while the third was cursed and condemned to be unfree, that is, to be a peasant because he had gazed at his father's exposed body while he was asleep in a drunken stupor. This is all based on the biblical account, Genesis 9:20-27, but it is repeated here, as countless times throughout the Middle Ages, to provide the necessary explanation and justification for the peasants' subordinated position in society. Hugo basically summarizes the canon of traditional opinions and reconfirms them directly, emphasizing, for instance, "Ein edelinc tuot edellichen, / Ein eselinc tuot esellichen" (1421–22; A noble acts nobly, an ass acts asininely).⁹ He indicates also that some groups of peasants might enjoy more freedom than others, but that altogether they must accept their destiny as the third class, obligated to obey the lords.

Hugo does not shy away from criticizing nobles, or the clergy, as many other social commentator did during the late Middle Ages,¹⁰ but overall he insists that peasants must not rise above their social status. In this regard he proves to in full conformity with the standard practices and ideology of his time, despite, or just because of the perceived threat of social unrest resulting from the peasants' desire to gain in public standing because they seem to have experienced better economic

⁹ Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann. Mit einem Nachwort und Ergänzungen von Günther Schweikle. Deutsche Neudrucke. Reihe: Texte des Mittelalters (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1970); for an excellent critical study of the social perceptions in Hugo's work, see Jutta Goheen, *Mensch und Moral im Mittelalter: Geschichte und Fiktion in Hugo von Trimbergs "Der Renner"* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 121–28; see also Rudolf Kilian Weigand, *Der "Renner" des Hugo von Trimberg: Überlieferung, Quellenabhängigkeit und Struktur einer spätmittelalterlichen Lehrdichtung*. Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 35 (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 2000); Albrecht Classen, "Thomasin von Zerclaere's *Der Waelsche Gast* and Hugo von Trimberg's *Renner*. Two Middle High German Didacticians Focus on the Gender Relationship," *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Ferros Ruys. Disputatio, 15 (Turnhout [Belgium]: Brepols, 2008), 205–29. I have discussed this text also in my Introduction.

¹⁰ Albrecht Classen, "Heinrich der Teichner: The Didactic Poet as a Troublemaker, Whistle-Blower, and Social Rebel," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series, 32 (2007): 63–81; id., "Heinrich der Teichner: Commentator and Critic of the Worlds of the Court," *Orbis Litterarum* 63.3 (2008): 237–61.

conditions.¹¹ In most cases courtly poets had very little positive to say about the peasants and tended to ridicule them in most drastic terms, as we observe, for instance, in the works by the troubadour Bertran de Born (late twelfth century) or in the even more biting and sarcastic songs by the Austrian-Bavarian poet Neidhart (early thirteenth century).¹² Apart from very few exceptions, I know only of songs in praise of peasants as the people's bread winners from the sixteenth century onwards, such as in the *Berner Liederbuch*.¹³ I will return to this issue at the end of our investigation.

So far I have only paraphrased what current scholarship has unearthed as to the relationship between nobility and the peasantry and about the global estimation of the peasant class, as viewed by the nobility or the clergy.¹⁴ Significantly, however, this universal perspective cannot be simply upheld because there are, after all, a number of highly noteworthy exceptions, at least as far as literary authors saw it. In at least two cases in Middle High German literature the authors present a most unusual situation where a young nobleman marries a peasant woman and spends the rest of his life in happiness with her. I propose to read both

¹¹ The best example for a farmer's son who wants to climb the social ladder but then only turns into a robber knight was provided by the late thirteenth-century Middle High German poet Wernher the Gardener with his verse novella *Helmbrecht*, ed. Friedrich Panzer and Kurt Ruh. 10th ed. by Hans-Joachim Ziegeler. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 11 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993). For critical studies on that text, see the contributions to *Wernher der Gärtner: 'Helmbrecht': Die Beiträge des Helmbrecht-Symposiums in Burghausen 2001*, ed. Theodor Nolte and Tobias Schneider (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 2001); see also Albrecht Classen, *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung: Die Suche nach der kommunikativen Gemeinschaft in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Beihefte zur Mediävistik, 1 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2002), 359–99.

¹² Peter Dinzelsbacher, *Europa im Hochmittelalter 1050–1250: Eine Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichte. Kultur und Mentalität* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2003), 139–42. For Neidhart, see Albrecht Classen, "The Ultimate Transgression of the Courtly World: Peasants on the Courtly Stage and Their Grotesque Quests for Sexual Pleasures. The Poetry by the Thirteenth-Century Austrian-Bavarian Neidhart," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 36 (2010): 1–24; id., "Transgression at the Medieval Court, Courtliness, and Deconstruction: With Emphasis on the Middle High German Poet Neidhart and the Anonymous Verse Novella *Mauritius von Craün*," to appear in *Arthuriana*.

¹³ "Der Bawersleuthen Lobgsang," no. 36 (Bürgerbibliothek Bern: Rar. 63). See Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Volksliedstudien, 1 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2001), 94. See also "Vom Edlen Bawman" (no. 133) in the *Ambraser Liederbuch*, 1582 (and in subsequent editions in the Frankfurt version of 1584ff.); *Deutsche Liederbücher*, 45.

¹⁴ Franz Günther, *Deutsches Bauerntum im Mittelalter*. Wege der Forschung, 416 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976); Werner Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans. [from the German] and with foreword and glossary by Alexander Stützer (1985; Cambridge: Polity, 1992); id., *Grundherrschaft und bauerliche Gesellschaft im Hochmittelalter*. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 115 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*. *Figurae* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Michael Toch, *Peasants and Jews in Medieval Germany: Studies in Cultural, Social, and Economic History*. Collected Studies (Aldershot, Hampshire, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

examples as evidence for a sort of utopian approach because in each narrative a highly unrealistic erotic relationship develops, which disregards all traditional class barriers and gives absolute priority to the erotic, or at least to deeply erotic feelings that supersede every social expectation with respect to marriage in the high Middle Ages.¹⁵

Exploring this issue will shed important light on a highly thorny issue which has been examined especially in recent years from a social, legal, gender, and emotional-historical perspective; marriage. Neil Cartlidge, for instance, has outlined in excellent clarity how much the issue itself had become the focal point of many public debates during that period, with a large number of theologians, lawyers, philosophers, and poets offering their opinions through a variety of texts. In fact, marriage served exceedingly well as a medium for one of the central discourses in medieval times, pitting the ordinary lay people against the clerics, each side pursuing its own agenda and ideology.¹⁶ In our cases we will additionally observe how much the question regarding true love might even transgress highly conservative approaches to the social hierarchy.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the popular motto “*amor vincit omnia*,” already commonly used by Virgil and Ovid, signaled many different messages, although I doubt that it also carried a social meaning as to the possibility that a man of the nobility would have agreed or would have received the permission to marry into the peasant class. Nevertheless, that is precisely the case, first in Hartmann von Aue’s *Der arme Heinrich* (ca. 1200; *Lord Henry [or Poor Henry]*), then in an

¹⁵ Recent scholarship has begun to explore the question how much the Middle Ages might have been familiar with utopia; see Tomas Tomasek, *Die Utopie im ‘Tristan’ Gotfrids von Straßburg*. Hermaea. Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 49 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1985); Albrecht Classen, “Die Suche nach der Utopie in der Gralswelt. Albrechts (von Scharfenberg) *Der jüngere Titurel*,” *Parzival. Reescritura y Transformación*, ed. Berta Raposo Fernández (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2000), 133–56. See also the contributions to *En quête d’Utopies*, ed. Claude Thomasset and Danièle James-Raoul. Cultures et Civilisations Médiévales (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005); and, most recently, Heiko Hartmann, “Utopias /Utopian Thought,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, Vol. 2, 1400–08 (see note 4).

¹⁶ Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997); Rüdiger Schnell, *Frauendiskurs, Männerdiskurs, Ehediskurs: Textsorten und Geschlechterkonzepte in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Reihe “Geschichte und Geschlechter”, 23 (Frankfurt a. M. and New York: Campus Verlag, 1998); id., *Sexualität und Emotionalität in der vormodernen Ehe* (Cologne, Weimar, et al.: Böhlau, 1002); Michael M. Sheehan, CSB, *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*, ed. James K. Farge. Introduction by Joel T. Rosenthal (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996); see also the contributions to *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan*, C.S.B., ed. Constance M. Rousseau and Joel T. Rosenthal. Studies in Medieval Culture, XXXVII (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1998); Albrecht Classen, *Der Liebes- und Ehediskurs vom hohen Mittelalter bis zum frühen 17. Jahrhundert*. Volksliedstudien, 5 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2005); D. L. D’Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

anonymous verse narrative, “Dis ist von dem Heslin” (ca. 1300; *The Little Bunny Rabbit*), although the circumstances surrounding each marriage respectively differ remarkably. Before concluding this study I will also encounter the evidence of late-medieval and early-modern folk poetry where we come across unsuspected examples of erotic utopias as well.

The famous cleric Andreas Capellanus outlined in his treatise *De amore* (ca. 1180–1190) the complexities in all wooing processes, hence of all gender relationships.¹⁷ In fact, as he confirms through the long series of dialogues between men and women mostly from different social classes, love was regarded from early on as a highly challenging matter which required intensive exchanges on the rhetorical, symbolic, ritual, and physical level. In the first two books, all men who try to gain their ladies’ love basically fail because the circumstances are not right, because the social class differences are too big, and because the women are simply resistant, unwilling to accept the men’s wooing. We cannot decide here whether Andreas pursued an ironic approach, or whether he was seriously interested in exploring gender relationships in the courtly context in terms of discourse.¹⁸ It might well be that the entire treatise served purely for literary, rhetorical, courtly entertainment, or that it reflected highly complex theoretical perspectives vis-à-vis courtly love, begging to be taken seriously as a representative of scholarly dialectics in the worldly context.

Here I want to focus only on one chapter in the second book, “The Love of Peasants” (XI). Andreas openly admitted his contempt for the farmers: “For a farmer hard labor and the uninterrupted solaces of plough and mattock are sufficient. And even if it should happen at times, though rarely, that contrary to their nature they are stirred up by Cupid’s arrows, it is not expedient that they should be instructed in the theory of love”¹⁹ As to the erotic relationship between a nobleman and a peasant woman, Andreas has only to say the following: “And if you should, by some chance, fall in love with some of their women, be

¹⁷ See also the contributions to *Masculinities and Femininities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 23 (Turnhout [Belgium]: Brepols, 2009).

¹⁸ See the contributions to *Speaking in the Medieval World*, ed. Jean E. Godsall-Myers. Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions, 16 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

¹⁹ Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. with introd. and notes by John Jay Parry. Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies (1941; New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1969), 149–50. Only once do we hear, in a fleeting comment by one of the noble ladies, of the possibility that a man of the lower class might rise up to the level of nobility, that is, when the prince recognizes his inner nobility and lifts him up from his low status (56; Book I, VI, 138). For a new translation with valuable commentary, see Andreas aulæ regiae capellanus, *De amore: Libri tres*. Text nach der Ausgabe von E. Trojel. Übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen und einem Nachwort versehen von Fritz Peter Knapp (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 92–93; for a commentary, see 618.

careful to puff them up with lots of praise and then, when you find a convenient place, do not hesitate to take what you seek and to embrace them by force. For you can hardly soften their outward inflexibility so far that they will grant you their embraces quietly or permit you to have the solaces you desire unless first you use a little compulsion as a convenient cure for their shyness" (150). In other words, if a nobleman wants to rape a peasant woman, that would be quite alright because they are not much more than animals anyway and secretly desire sexual pleasure from any man.²⁰

The situation in Hartmann von Aue's verse novella *Der arme Heinrich* (Poor Henry, or Lord Henry) proves to be entirely different and offers a literary stage where a utopian model of love is allowed to enter the picture. Here a young nobleman, Henry, having been struck by leprosy and not being able to receive ardently desired medical help, not even from the best medical doctors, retires to the farm of a wealthy man who has apparently enjoyed his lord's generosity and support over many years. Although everyone in the country and even abroad laments Henry's destiny, he finds no solace and no individual support. He knows that he is going to die fast, and so he does not want to impose himself on anyone, except for that rich farmer, whom he almost regards as a friend. As the commentator emphasizes, farmers' destiny and life conditions depended very much on the individual attitude by their lords, and while some had to suffer badly, this farmer has always enjoyed a good relationship with Lord Henry (269–75).²¹ This peasant does not have to assume any additional work loads for him, and is free of the quite common requirement to assist other lords (276–80). In fact, here we encounter a

²⁰ For a discussion of rape in the Middle Ages, see Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Corinne J. Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2001); see also the contributions to *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose. The New Middle Ages (New York: and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001); see also my monograph, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages: A Critical Discourse in Medieval German and European Literature*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 7 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011).

²¹ Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich*, ed. Hermann Paul. 16th, newly rev. ed. by Kurt Gärtner. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 3 (1882; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1996); see also the English translation *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). Here I rely on my own translations. For recent studies on Hartmann, see *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Francis G. Gentry. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2005). For an excellent commentary, see Hartmann von Aue, *Gregorius, Der arme Heinrich*, ed. and trans. by Volker Mertens. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 6 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2004).

rich man, although he has maintained his humble attitude and respect for the upper social class, and now, witnessing his lord's misery, showers him with the best treatment possible, provides him with a splendid apartment, and does not spare any effort to make Henry's life as comfortable as possible under those terrible circumstances of his disease.

While the farmer and his wife continue with their ordinary business, one of their daughters, only eight years of age, dedicates all her attention to the leper and develops, although this is only implied indirectly, an erotic attachment to Henry. Everyone else flees from his presence, horrified about his appearance, whereas the girl enjoys being with her lord more than anything else. As scholars have argued many times already, the relationship between these two young people intensifies subsequently, and when the girl—or rather young woman, particularly after three years have passed—finally learns of Henry's only chance of recovery, she immediately declares her willingness to offer the sacrifice of her own blood for his well-being.²² From a modern perspective we might have to raise a number of questions as to the appropriateness of Henry's behavior toward the girl, since he regularly brings her highly symbolic gifts, calls her his "gemahel" (341; bride), and allows her to spend all her time with him, despite the huge age and class difference between them. For our purposes, however, let us ignore this curious and highly unique situation and turn rather toward the family situation and the world of the rural population.

Henry has been informed by the medical doctor in Salerno that only the blood of a virgin willing to die for him would rescue him from certain death. Knowing too well that this would not be possible to obtain, Henry has abandoned his former life of wealth and high living and has withdrawn to this farm. At one point, however, the farmer, his wife, and their daughter all sit together and share their company. The couple cries over their lord's destiny, without knowing how they might help him. As the narrator's comments illustrate, however, they are more worried about what would happen to their lives if Henry were to die soon, than about the leper's destiny. For them his death would certainly mean the loss of property and honor because they then would have to face a new lord who would certainly impose new demands for taxes and fees (360–65). Only upon their urging the leper finally begins to tell them what he had learned from the medical doctor, revealing the whole truth which seems to dangle some hope before his eyes, in reality, however, it condemns him to certain death.

²² Again, since this verse novella enjoys such huge reputation and popularity, countless scholars have offered their critical views on this figure, her action, and her relationship with Henry. See Albrecht Classen, "Herz und Seele in Hartmanns von Aue 'Der arme Heinrich.'" *Der mittelalterliche Dichter als Psychologe?*, *Mediaevistik* 14 (2003): 7–30. As to the function of blood sacrifice, see Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood. Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 60, 78.

The fact by itself that Henry spends time with that peasant family and reveals to them his secret, that is, the precarious nature of his life and the imminent threat of his death, indicates a considerable degree of trust and confidence among them. We cannot deduce, however, any kind of friendship because the farmer couple clearly continues to regard him as their lord and submissively treats him with great respect. Henry, on the other hand, does not hold back and opens his heart to these people, probably because there is no one left with whom he could share the bad news. He does not even shy away from revealing to them his religious reflections and moral concerns regarding his own life, as if they were his equals, perhaps even his friends. Henry comments that erstwhile he had assumed the role of lord, whereas now he is in need of the peasant's help: "hie vor was ich dîn herre / und bin dîn dürtige nû. / mîn lieber vriunt, nû kôufestû / und mîn gemahel und dîn wîp / an mir den êwigen lîp / daz dû mich siechen bî dir lâst" (428–33; Before I was your lord, and now I am your indigent. My dear friend, now you, my beloved [the girl] and your wife acquire the eternal life through me by allowing me as a sick person to stay with you). Henry is trying his best to humble and to mortify himself, having realized how little all of his previous status and wealth truly means in the face of God's power which brought leprosy upon him. For that reason he resorts to the term 'friend' and identifies the peasant as his true benefactor.²³ Thereupon he relates what the doctor in Salerno had informed him about, but then consigns himself to his destiny because he would never be able to find a nubile woman willing to die for him.²⁴

The subsequent events, certainly the core section in the verse narrative, have been discussed from many different perspectives, which underscores the enormous literary quality of this text. Summarizing it briefly, the young woman overhears Henry's confession, and soon enough decides on her own to accept that sacrifice on behalf of her lord to help him regain his health. The debate between her and her parents proves to be a powerful masterpiece of rhetoric, drawing on a full register of theological, economic, and ethical arguments, which finally convince both her parents and Henry.²⁵ She even ridicules the medical doctor in Salerno, exposing his timidity, as she sees it, and eagerly awaits her death which would accelerate her passage to Heaven and free her from the devil's countless temptations. However, just before the doctor begins to start cutting into her body

²³ As to the medieval discourse on friendship, see the contributions to *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 6 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

²⁴ See, for instance, Birgit A. Jensen, "Transgressing the Body: Leper and Girl in Hartmann von Aue's 'Armer Heinrich,'" *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 61 (2006): 103–26.

²⁵ David Duckworth, *The Leper and the Maiden in Hartmann's Der arme Heinrich*. *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik*, 627 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996).

to remove her heart, Henry gazes through a little hole in the wall, recognizes her stunning beauty in the likeness of God, and quickly reverses his own decision to accept her sacrifice. Although she curses bitterly at him for being such a coward, Henry remains steadfast and returns home with her. Because he has accepted his own punishment at God's hand and has proven his worthiness as a good Christian, he miraculously regains his health on their return voyage.

Once he has reached the border to Swabia, his former friends and relatives joyfully greet and welcome him back, and then support him in his desire to find a marriage partner as the crowning achievement of his young life. Thus, after long suffering in the vein of biblical Job, he regains all of his former honor, wealth, and power, that is, he rises once again to the highest position in aristocratic society, which also requires that he choose a wife as his consort.

But Henry has not forgotten the peasant family and their daughter, whom he treats with greatest respect because actually it was she who had really saved his life, not through her blood, but through her willingness to die and through her physical beauty, which he had witnessed when he had gazed through a hole in the wall separating him from the surgeon's office.²⁶ First, however, he transforms all the land belonging to the farm into the peasant's property, raising him fully to the status of a free man: "er gap in zeigen dâ zehant / daz breite geriute. / die erde und die liute, / dâ er dô siecher ûfe lac" (1442–45; he gave him the wide range of land and the people working there and where he had stayed as a sick man as his personal property).

Once all his friends and advisors have assembled, they argue bitterly about what woman might be the proper consort for him, as was commonly done in medieval marriage practices. After a while, Henry addresses them as a truly changed man, pointing out how much he himself owes his entire life to his young female companion, and then surprises them with the decision to marry only her and no other woman. The narrator resorts to the significant term "trûtgemahel" (1490; beloved bride), underscoring the degree to which Henry really loves her, especially since he then embraces her, emphasizing that she would be his only choice; otherwise he would prefer to remain unmarried (1503), which proves to be a most powerful threat by him and against which the council does not dare to speak up. On the contrary, they all immediately approve of his decision: "Nû sprâchen si alle gelîche, / beide arme und rîche, / ez wære ein michel vuoge"

²⁶ For a discussion of the amatory gaze, especially in correlation with late-medieval optics, see Dana E. Stewart, *The Arrow of Love: Optics, Gender, and Subjectivity in Medieval Love Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 2003). She does not, however, consider the case of Hartmann's novella. See also A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

(1509–11; They all said in one voice, both the poor and the rich people, that it would be very appropriate to do so).

With this turn of events the narrative quickly reaches its conclusion, and we only learn that the couple enjoyed a long and happy life together, and ultimately, after their death, gained their salvation (1514–16). The erstwhile social difference no longer matters, and the poet even goes so far as to enjoin his audience to take this case as a model for their own lives (1517–18). As fleeting as this reference might be, and as unrealistic as the tale seems to be in the face of totally different social and economic conditions in the High Middle Ages—disregarding some exceptional situations here and there—Hartmann still projects an ideal form of marriage based on mutual love, respect, and honor. The utopian outcome still conforms well to Christian values, whereas it appears to contradict the concrete conditions within aristocratic society. However, that is the privilege of Hartmann's literary discourse, which facilitates the projection of imaginary situations and thus provides the basis for the presentation of a utopia that found extremely few parallels in medieval literature.

As the poet suggests, his protagonist regains his health primarily, of course, through God's grace, but also through the young woman's love, her virtually celestial beauty, and her utter commitment to Henry, whose life she wants to rescue at all costs, which underscores what ideal the poet tried to present. To be clear, Hartmann does not, project the peasant world as ideal and preferable to noble existence. The leper retires to the farm only because he feels so deeply mortified and helpless, knowing exceedingly well of his horrible disfigurement and destiny of certain and quick death as a kind of divine punishment for his previous sinful life as a nobleman.²⁷ Once God has healed him again, however, this young man does not continue with his existence in the countryside. He does not pursue an alternative life style in nature *avant la lettre*, so to speak. Farms are for farmers, not for kings. Hence, the peasant daughter moves into his palace, and not the other way around.

However, a number of small but significant factors deserve to be considered to understand how the poet viewed the world of the farmers. First, long before having contracted leprosy, Henry had demonstrated his extraordinary generosity to the farmer. Second, this generosity had led to a considerable level of familiarity and a sense of community involving the farmer's family and Henry. Third,

²⁷ See, for instance, François-Olivier Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Âge: la lèpre, les lépreux et les léproseries dans la province ecclésiastique de sens jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle*. Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, 11 (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1998); Peter L. Allen, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (2000; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, UK, and Rochester, VT: Boydell Press, 2006); *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. Joshua Eyler (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

although caught by a horrible and miserable disease, Henry recognizes the astounding beauty of the farmer's daughter and develops a sort of erotic relationship with her. Fourth, he freely reveals to the family what he had learned from the medical doctor in Salerno. Fifth, Henry displays his profound gratitude for the girl's action which ultimately saves his life by way of turning the entire farm over to the farmer as his personal property, elevating him out of his traditional social class and making him a free man. Last but not the least, Henry opts to marry the young woman because he admires her, finds her most attractive, and knows how to appreciate her dedication and love for him.

All this does not transform *Der arme Heinrich* into a literary account of a social utopia, but it certainly indicates that the poet did not hesitate in his religious drive to argue that a fulfilling and happy marriage could be arranged even between a nobleman and a peasant's daughter—and this in radical opposition to the teachings by Andreas Capellanus (see above). Henry's rescue awaits him not at court, but in the countryside. No noble lady would have ever been willing to offer herself as sacrifice for Henry's recovery, but the farmer's daughter proved her noble heart, true love, and spirituality. Of course, we must be very careful in the critical assessment of the girl's readiness to die for Henry. After all, suicide was radically condemned by the Christian Church,²⁸ and even her best arguments in defense of her decision to give her heart's blood for Henry, which certainly convince her parents and the leprous lord, ultimately would have to be identified as false and misleading. Nevertheless, she emerges as the critical catalyst for his healing, and this not through her death but through her innocence, beauty, and readiness to die for her beloved lord.²⁹

As Susan L. Clark once commented, "the exchange of a life for a life—which Heinrich ultimately rejects for all of the right reasons—cuts across the social, feudal hierarchy. The true motives of love for one's fellow man know no social

²⁸ Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*. Vol. II: *The Curse on Self Murder* (2000; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), offers an extensive discussion of the discourse on suicide, but he hardly examines literary evidence, and certainly not Hartmann von Aue's case. But his discussion demonstrates how much the authorities in medieval reality would have rejected and condemned the girl's willingness to sacrifice herself for Henry.

²⁹ Eva-Maria Carne, *Die Frauengestalten bei Hartmann von Aue: Ihre Bedeutung im Aufbau und Gehalt der Epen*. Marburger Beiträge zur Germanistik 31 (Marburg a. d. L.: N. G. Elwert, 1970), 118, correctly observes: "Die seelische Heilung des Ritters wird nur möglich, weil eine warme persönliche Beziehung zwischen ihm und dem Bauernmädchen besteht. Die herzliche Beziehung zu diesem einen, besonderen Menschenkind, dessen verklärte Schönheit ihm plötzlich aufgeht, macht ihn hellsehtig und öffnet ihn ganz dem Einfluß ihres Wesens. Indem er sie anschaut, sieht er auch sich" (The knight's spiritual healing is only possible because there is a warm, personal relationship between him and the peasant girl. This heartfelt relationship to this one, very special human creature, whose celestial beauty he suddenly realizes, opens his eyes and makes him receptive for the influence of her being. By looking at her, he also recognizes himself).

class. A well-born maiden does not make the offer to die for Heinrich, nor is a low-born maiden summarily sacrificed."³⁰ Ultimately, as we can observe, the protagonist's transformation and hence healing, that is, the recovery of his self and his return to God takes place not at the court, not among the aristocratic public, but it begins at the farm and is finally completed at the doctor's office and on Henry's return home (though then no longer to the farm!). It is certainly true that the peasant girl shines forth through her physical beauty, which could be regarded as a sign of inborn nobility, despite her social status as a farmer's daughter,³¹ and in this regard we might well consider her as a predecessor of Boccaccio's famous and yet most troublesome Griselda figure whom the Marquess of Saluzzo, Gualtieri, marries because he regards her as the most honorable and trustworthy person (10th day, 10th tale).³²

There are many courtly love poems in which beautiful nature, mostly in spring time, provides the ideal backdrop to the events surrounding the lovers, commonly expressed through the *locus-amoenus* topos.³³ One of those can be found in Walther

³⁰ Susan L. Clark, *Hartmann von Aue: Landscapes of Mind* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1989), 141. For a religious and spiritual interpretation, see Volker Mertens's comments in his edition, *Hartmann von Aue, Gregorius, Der arme Heinrich*, 884–86 (see note 21). For a broad, mostly summary interpretation, see Christoph Cormeau and Wilhelm Störmer, *Hartmann von Aue: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung*. Arbeitsbücher zur Literaturgeschichte (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1985), 153–59.

³¹ Helmut Tervooren, "Schönheitsbeschreibung und Gattungsethik in der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik," *Schöne Frauen – Schöne Männer: Literarische Schönheitsbeschreibungen*. 2. Kolloquium der Forschungsstelle für europäische Literatur des Mittelalters, ed. Theo Stemmler (Mannheim: Forschungsstelle für europäische Literatur des Mittelalters, 1988), 171–98; Dieter Kartschoke, "Der Herr von Schwaben und das Bauernmädchen im Armen Heinrich Hartmanns von Aue," *Paare und Paarungen: Festschrift für Werner Wunderlich zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth, together with Michaela Auer-Müller. Stuttgarter Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 420 (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 2004), 213–18. C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 36–37. In particular, he points out that the "ideal of *kalos kai agathos* made virtue, *areté*, into the inner motivating force signaled by external refinements" (37). James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love*, 79–91 (see note 2) coined the brilliant term "aristophilia" for this phenomenon, indicating the expression of nobility both through the bodily appearance ("sexually dimorphic", 79) and through the noble character.

³² Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. by Richard Aldington (1962; New York: Dell Publishing, 1970); some of the best recent scholarly discussions can be found in Marilyn Migiel's monograph, *A Rhetoric of the Decameron* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 5, 13, 40, 50, et passim. See also the further references below.

³³ The classical study for this observation remains until today Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Trans. From the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series XXXVI (1948; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 194–200; see also Dagmar Thoss, *Studien zum locus amoenus im Mittelalter*. Wiener romanistische Arbeiten, X (Vienna: Braumüller, 1972); Ursula Frühe, *Das Paradies ein Garten – der Garten ein Paradies: Studien zur Literatur des Mittelalters unter Berücksichtigung der bildenden Kunst und Architektur Europäische Hochschul-*

von der Vogelweide's "Under der linden" (L. 39,11, or no. 16 in mss. BC; Under the Linden Tree).³⁴ Although the narrative focus rests on the idyllic, park-like setting where the two lovers meet, outside of the castle or city, close to the edge of the forest, relying heavily on rhetorical elements borrowed from classical bucolic poetry and especially from the medieval genre of the *pastourelle*, the narrative voice still projects the distant place under the linden tree as ideal for lovers to get together and to enjoy each other to the fullest extent possible. True love seems to be realizable only far away from society, in that lovely dale where the young man has already prepared a bed out of petals and grass for both of them.³⁵

We cannot completely make out whether the love scene takes place truly in a rural space, but we know for sure that the location was far enough away from society to guarantee some kind of privacy. At the same time, there is the good possibility that some individuals might come by, taking the same path through the meadow and observe the abandoned nature bed where they had made love with each other. The narrative voice does not include any references to farm land, farm animals, or farmers. We only learn that the lone observers could clearly recognize what had happened there, and then would smile filled with silent delight about the complete happiness which had been realized there. However, the petals upon which the lovers had lain had to be taken from roses, and the bird in the linden tree which had been their only witness turns out to be a nightingale. In other words, Walther heavily drew on traditional topoi for the description of an idyllic nature scene.

Still, there is no doubt about a certain degree of criticism of courtly society because true love seems to be possible only far away, almost, though not quite, in the forest, at the limit between human society and wild nature.³⁶ As Gerhard Hahn notes, "Die Szene allerdings verweist auf ländliches Milieu, auf die *puella*-Sphäre. Ihr ist aber, wie gezeigt, inhaltlich und darstellerisch alles genommen, was den

schriften: Reihe 18, Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, 103 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2002). For lyrical examples from the Iberian Peninsula, see *Locus amoenus: antología de la lírica medieval de la península ibérica (latín, árabe, hebreo, mozárabe, provenzal, galaico-portugués, castellano y catalán)*, ed. Carlos Alvar and Jenaro Talens (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg/Círculo de Lectores, 2009).

³⁴ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*. 14., völlig neubearbeitete Auflage der Ausgabe Karl Lachmanns mit Beiträgen von Thomas Bein und Horst Brunner, ed. Christoph Cormeau (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 77–78.

³⁵ For further discussions of this poem in a variety of contexts, see also the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

³⁶ Ann Marie Rasmussen, "Representing Woman's Desire: Walther's Woman's Stanzas in 'Ich hoere iu sô vil tugende jehen' (L 43, 9), 'Under der linden' (L 39, 11), and 'Frô Welt' (L 100, 24)," *Women as Protagonists and Poets in the German Middle Ages: An Anthology of Feminist Approaches to Middle High German Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 528 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), 69–85.

Tadel *sô nidere* gerechtfertigt erscheinen ließe" (The scene, however, points toward the rural environment, to the sphere of the *puella*. But the poet removed, as I have demonstrated, both in content and in the presentation, everything which could have made the criticism against the 'low class' justified).³⁷ Both the secrecy of this love affair and the idyllic setting, and then also the ephemeral experience, since fulfilled love seems to be just fleeting here, underscore undoubtedly that Walther projected, in a sense, a utopian setting, again in rural space.³⁸ All this does not necessarily mean, however, that the poet wanted to inject the idea that true love could only be found with a peasant woman, far from it. His concept of 'nidere minne' (low love) was not predicated on the idea of social class conflicts or the transgression of social roles, but on the concept of how to find true love outside of courtly society freed from the constraints of feudalism.³⁹

This now allows us to take the next step and to turn to the second major example of a verse narrative which illustrates how much the deliberate transgression of the social class boundaries might facilitate the experience of true love, while all attempts to gain that happiness amidst the aristocratic class, at court, are virtually condemned to fail. The essential issue continues to be how to find true love, irrespective of social expectations. The anonymous author of the most remarkable verse narrative in medieval German literature, "Dis ist von dem Heselin" ("Das Häslein," or "The Little Bunny Rabbit"), composed sometime at the end of the thirteenth century, preserved in only one manuscript in Strasbourg, which was burned in 1870 when the library was set to flames during the Prussian-French war, offers one of the most fascinating literary constellations where a young noble man realizes that the innocent, perhaps even foolish, but certainly beautiful and honorable peasant girl proves to be a much more worthy marriage partner than the hypocritical, arrogant, and disingenuous courtly lady whom his friends have suggested to him as his future wife. In the world of love, as we can reasonably surmise, social and economic conditions tend to collide with issues of pure and simple emotions, and so as well in the late Middle Ages.⁴⁰

³⁷ Gerhard Hahn, "Walthers Minnesang," Horst Brunner, Gerhard Hahn, Ulrich Müller, and Franz Viktor Spechtler, *Walther von der Vogelweide: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung*. 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (1996; Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), 74–134; here 106.

³⁸ Mary M. Paddock, "Speaking of Spectacle: Another Look at Walther's 'Lindenlied'," *German Quarterly* 77.1 (2004): 11–28.

³⁹ Achim Masser, "Zu den sogenannten 'Mädchenliedern' Walthers von der Vogelweide," *Wirkendes Wort* 39.1 (1989): 3–15; Cyril Edwards, "Hère Frowe: Case, Number, and Rank in Walther von der Vogelweide's 'Lindenlied'," *Modern Language Review* 99.1 (2004): 94–100. The literature on this specific song and on Walther's love poetry at large is legion, but suffice it to refer to these two studies. See also the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

⁴⁰ Here I quote from *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed., trans., and commentary by Klaus Grubmüller. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 23 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996)

Although the male protagonist belongs to the nobility, he is immediately presented as being involved with his farm hands because his efforts to hunt down a little rabbit that had been frightened by his arrival and had fled into a field of wheat fail remarkably. However, one of the workers, without using any knightly trapping, succeeds in capturing the little rabbit and hands it over to his lord, who then happily holds the animal in his lap, hoping that he could use it as a gift for the lady whom he had wooed for a long time in vain (39–55). There does not seem to be any conversation between the nobleman and his servant, but without the latter's help the rabbit would have escaped him. Moreover, now in possession of this fuzzy creature, he keeps riding along and approaches a village, where he encounters a young peasant woman. Although she belongs to the lowest social class, the narrator does not hesitate to describe her as a beautiful noble lady: "edel, schoene und fin" (62; noble, beautiful, and attractive). Moreover, she appears like a "juncvrouwen zart" (68; tender young lady), which obviously facilitates her to engage the knight in an exchange. Significantly, he greets her first, whereupon she inquires about the origin of the rabbit (70–71). Although she belongs to the peasant class, the knight does not hesitate to respond to her respectfully, although he then seduces her by offering her the rabbit in exchange for her *minne* (84), meaning courtly love at large, but here specifically her sexual favor.

He rejects all her attempts to offer any of her personal treasures, such as rings and her valuable belt because he has already realized her naivete and finds her so attractive that he is burning with the desire to sleep with her. Since she is all alone, her mother and all the servants attending church service, they can subsequently carry out the barter, which means that he can have sex with her, for which he hands over the rabbit, no longer thinking about his original beloved, who has completely disappeared from the narrative. As the commentator remarks, she proves to be most beautiful, and would outshine any other woman insofar as even God would be delighted to look at her (132).

In many respects we are dealing with the same situation here as in the lyrical genre of the *pastourelle*, except that the young woman soon enough enjoys the sexual pleasures so much that she asks him to sleep with her not only a second, but also a third time.⁴¹ Just as in the *pastourelle*, we face the unique constellation of

and, respectively, from my English translation in *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany*. Selected and trans. by Albrecht Classen. Second ed. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 3 (2007; Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 35–41. I have already discussed this narrative in a variety of other contexts, most recently with regard to the male protagonist's highly symbolic laughter: "Laughing in Late-Medieval Verse (*mæren*) and Prose (*Schwänke*) Narratives: Epistemological Strategies and Hermeneutic Explorations," *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. id. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 547–85; here 550–65.

⁴¹ For a useful and compact introduction to the genre, see William D. Paden, "Pastourelle," *The New*

a knight in a tryst with a peasant woman, albeit the narrator describes her in highly laudatory terms, praising her as a most pleasing and well-mannered virgin (124–30). Moreover, she does not resist his wooing and readily grants him his sexual wishes, even though out of ignorance at first, and then because she herself delights in experiencing orgasms. We would certainly call the knight's behavior rather reprehensible, if not rape, especially because he had abused her childish ignorance and the situation with her being all alone on the farm. The narrator, however, indicates himself that the situation amounts to a criminal act insofar as the knight is worried of being caught *in flagrante* and sleeps with her only after he has learned that the entire family along with the servants are gone. Moreover, when she wants him to sleep with her a third time, he refuses, not because he is physically exhausted, but because he correctly worries that her family might return and catch him in the act (276–78), which constitutes, as he himself knows only too well, a kind of statutory rape, as we would call it today.⁴²

The subsequent events can be quickly summarized and do not concern us here to a large extent. The girl presents the rabbit to her mother once the latter has returned from church, but instead of displaying great joy about the delightful animal, the mother beats her up badly, though without explaining the reasons for her behavior. Not surprisingly, the young woman, in her naivete, tries to amend, but not by staying away from this seducer, the knight; instead she is on the lookout for him and finally spies him again three days later. She insists on a reversal of their barter, which he happily complies with, and he even leaves the rabbit with her because he does not have any need for it and is happy enough with freely having had sex with her once again. As the narrator remarks: “wer zwîvelt an dem mære, / dem guoten ritter wære / mit ir reiner minne wol?” (259–61; who would doubt the story that this good knight was truly happy with her innocent love?).

Despite the narrator's attempts to whitewash the young man—“nieman daz unbilden sol / noch waz der âventiure geschiht” (263–64; no one should think badly about it nor about anything else what happened here)—he has certainly transgressed and can be regarded as a perpetrator, robbing the young peasant

Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 888; Jay Ruud, “Pastourelle,” *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature*, ed. id. (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 494–95; for a more comprehensive treatment, see now Geri L. Smith, *The Medieval French Pastourelle Tradition: Poetic Motivations and Generic Transformations* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009). For a good text edition and translation, see *The Medieval Pastourelle*, trans. and ed. by William D. Paden. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 34–35 (New York: Garland, 1987). For the German tradition, see Sabine Christiane Brinkmann, *Die deutschsprachige Pastourelle, 13.–16. Jahrhundert*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 307 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1986).

⁴² Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens* (see note 20); Corinne J. Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment* (see note 20); see also my monograph, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages*, 129–34 (see note 20).

woman of her virginity. When we hear that he had actually demonstrated all his virtuous behavior by restoring her virginity through sleeping with her once again (274–75), we clearly notice the satire, if not sarcasm hidden between the lines. And when the girl's mother learns of the new event, she breaks out in fury and blames herself for having neglected her parental responsibility to guard her daughter from such sexual attacks (296–304). The young woman does not view her experience in such negative terms and encourages her mother to disregard the misfortune that has struck her because she would accept her own responsibility and would remember it with joy, since she had had, after all, a most joyful experience with the knight (310–11).

The critical issue in this verse narrative hinges on the question what virginity means and whether society can trust external appearance, as signaled by women wearing a specific wreath symbolizing that virginity. As we learn soon thereafter, dissimulation, however, can easily come into play and make all physical symbols disingenuous and ambivalent. When the knight is supposed to get married, his lovely bride wears that very wreath (327), and he looks forward to a joyful life with his future wife, trusting her virtuosity and honor (330–32). Soon enough the wedding preparations set in, and the knight invites all of his friends and relatives, not forgetting even the peasant girl and her mother. Although his affair with the former constitutes a scandal, as the mother had expressed most dramatically, the knight still believes that these two women should be part of the festivities. According to the narrator the knight is motivated by his noble heart (348), but he also requests that the girl bring the rabbit with her, which seems rather odd, if not inappropriate, as the narrator indicates himself: “wie het er si gelâzen dâ!” (351; if he only had let her stay at home!).⁴³

Surprisingly, yet quite meaningfully, the knight returns to the village to invite mother and daughter himself, and the maid, who recognizes him first, immediately identifies him as her lover: “ir vriunt, ze dem si herze truoc” (555; her friend for whom she felt love). The mother begrudges the knight's arrival bitterly, since he has raped her daughter, but she also thinks, although being only a peasant woman, that the knight should have married her daughter to restore the latter's honor: “sît er des hoves solte / billîch, ob er wolte, / pflegen mit der tochter dîn” (371–73; since he should properly hold a wedding feast with your daughter, if he only were willing). Subsequently the mother accepts the invitation, which fills the knight with great happiness, although we do not yet quite understand the reasons. The circumstances seem to imply that the attendance by the girl and her mother at his wedding would be more important than anything else, as soon enough

⁴³ Albrecht Classen, “Erotic Symbolism, Laughter, and Hermeneutics at Work in Late-Medieval *mæren*. The Case of *Das Häslein*,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, NS. 34 (2008): 87–104. All relevant research literature, as far as I know, is reviewed there.

proves to be true. Revealingly, the knight replies to the mother, when she has accepted: “*genâde und danc habent iemer; / der tugende vergiz ich niemer*” (581–82; my thanks to you for ever, I will never forget your gracefulness).

When the specified day has arrived, and the wedding festivities are already fully under way, mother and daughter actually arrive, the young woman carrying the rabbit in her arms. The narrator comments, once again, on the girl’s extraordinary beauty, describing her as a miracle: “*ein wunder dô kam in geriten*” (389; a miracle came riding in). But isn’t she a peasant’s daughter? Or at least a simple village maid? Details escape us, but the poet has certainly set her apart from the entire court society, both by having her live in the village and by having the knight go out of his way to invite her to his wedding. All his other guests he had invited in generic ways, probably by means of messengers, whereas he himself had returned to the village to find mother and daughter and to encourage them to accept his invitation, probably in the correct assumption that they would not feel encouraged enough to accept the formal invitation. After all, why would representatives of the peasant class mingle with the aristocratic wedding crowd?

As soon as the knight witnesses the group with the rabbit, he breaks out in loud laughter, but he hides the reason for a long time until his fiancée threatens him with treating him later in life in the worst possible manner. But once he has revealed the truth and told her the whole story, she only scoffs at the young woman, obviously her competitor for the knight’s heart, and relays some background information about herself in order to ridicule the girl. She herself had slept with the estate priest already hundred times, without her own mother having ever learned anything about this affair (438–48).⁴⁴ In her foolishness she only perceives the problem for the girl to be that she had received the mother’s beating, not understanding that the issue consists of having had sexual contacts before marriage.

The denouement that follows next proves to be rather surprising, and will support our argument that the idea of having a representative of the nobility marry a peasant girl constituted a kind of medieval utopia. The knight feels deeply shocked about this revelation, and realizes quickly that he had brutally ravaged the peasant girl although she is the most virtuous and innocent creature he has ever met. In fact, the knight feels shame for his mockery, his laughter, and at the same time deep anger and frustration with his bride who would certainly cuckold him later in their life if he would actually marry her. In an abrupt reversal of the narrative set-up, he gets up, brings the girl to his table, and treats her as if she were his actual bride. Most surprisingly, he next steps forward and relays to all his guests the story of each woman, asking them thereupon whom they would

⁴⁴ For further discussions about the knight’s laughter and the fiancée’s admission about her own misbehavior, see my study “Laughing in Late-Medieval Verse” (see note 40).

consider as more virtuous and worthy as his future wife. Everyone immediately agrees that the peasant girl would be his ideal wife, especially if he were to consider his own and her honor and virtues: "ob er gedenken wolte, / waz billich wære und êre" (496–97; if he were to keep in mind what would be proper and pertinent for his honor).

The young man has divulged, as we can assume, all details about the peasant woman's social background, her naivete and ignorance, and her willingness to sell her *minne* for the highly symbolic, that is, erotically charged rabbit. By the same token, he has revealed his fiancée's duplicity and disingenuousness, hence exposed her failure to live up to the ideals by which members of her own social class would be judged. In other words, both the knight and all his guests agree that true love and dedication, honor and virtuosity play a bigger role than the pretense or screen put up by the noble lady who wanted to marry the knight as part of a social contract (not love, of course), although she herself had already lost her virginity a long time ago to the chaplain.

The narrator concludes his account placing greatest emphasis on the natural course of all events. Although the outcome is the marriage of the knight with the peasant girl, this proves to be the right decision and meets the full confirmation because "daz sîn sol, daz muoz geschehen" (505; what has to happen that will happen). He does not even consider any of the traditional criteria determining marriage arrangements; instead he projects a virtually utopian setting in which the only desirable wife for the nobleman proves to be the peasant's daughter because she is not only extremely beautiful, but because she also represents true honor, virtue, innocence, and love. In other words, closely following Hartmann's model, the anonymous poet projects a utopian framework in which a happy marriage can be achieved even when the usual social criteria are disregarded in favor of honest emotions, affections, and ethical values, as they can be found, such as in this case, even among the peasant class.⁴⁵

There are certainly a number of parallels between this *mære* and other Middle High German examples, such as *Der Sperber* and the Old French *fabliaux* "La Grue" and "Le Héron."⁴⁶ But we would look in vain for further cases in medieval literature where such an erotic utopia, allowing a man and a woman from two different social classes to get together and marry out of love, might be presented

⁴⁵ laus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Mære – Novelle* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006), 78, 127, 132, 141–42, 227. Can we really confirm that the knight's decision to reject the pre-selected bride, his fiancée, and to marry the peasant girl instead represents the collapse of the "'Mären-Welt,'" as Grubmüller argues (142)? The pretenses of aristocratic society fail, or are ridiculed, but the narrative really comes to a satisfying, though astounding conclusion without destroying the traditional social parameters because the peasant woman rises up to the class of the aristocracy.

⁴⁶ Stephen L. Wailes, "The Hunt of the Hare in 'Das Häslein,'" *Seminar* 5.2. (1969): 92–101.

as a possibility—the only noteworthy exception being the French *chanteable* “Aucassin et Nicolette” or the entire corpus of verse narratives dealing with *Floire et Blancheflor*.⁴⁷ We could also refer to numerous *mæren* or *fabliaux* that take place in the social sphere of the urban or the rural class, although the love relationships described in those accounts do not reflect such radical transgressions of a social kind. There is no shortage of representatives of the merchant class, and sometimes even of the peasantry, but then the trouble with which they have to deal pertain to their own social background and is not predicated on any specific cases of class transgression. This would justify us, ultimately, to identify both Hartmann’s verse narrative and the anonymous *mære* “Dis ist von dem Heselin” as literary experiments based at least to some extent on the concept of utopia. This is an erotic utopia in which love connects a nobleman with a simple peasant girl, who soon enough evolves into the ideal bride. The nobleman ardently desires to marry this woman because she represents the dream image of a most beautiful and virtuous wife, as we will soon enough hear about in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (Griselda) and in many subsequent variants of that specific story (X, 10).⁴⁸ I cannot do justice here to the highly complex nature of Boccaccio’s treatment of this material, especially considering the brutality of her husband, the prince Gualtieri, and Griselda’s almost infinite patience, humility, and modesty. But we can be certain that Griselda represents, once again, the world of the farmers, a product of parents of highest standards in virtues and morality. Unfortunately, this does not provide any real protection for these innocent women, who are victimized by their future noble husbands, as I have already discussed in the Introduction to this volume.

⁴⁷ *Aucassin and Nicolette*, ed. Anne Elizabeth Cobby, with a trans. and introduction by Glyn S. Burgess. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series A, 47 (New York and London: Garland, 1988); *The Romance of Floire and Blanchefleur; a French Idyllic Poem of the Twelfth Century*. Translated into English verse by Merton Jerome Hubert. Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 63 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press [1966]); Albrecht Classen, “Suffering in Konrad Fleck’s *Flore und Blanscheflur* as a Catalyst in the Meeting with the Foreign: Emotional Bonds with the Orient in a Late-Medieval Sentimental Romance,” to appear in *Neophilologus*.

⁴⁸ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (see note 32). See also the text collection, prepared by Françoise Cazal, *L’histoire de Griselda: une femme exemplaire dans les littératures européennes*, sous la direction de Jean-Luc Nardone et Henri Lamarque. Interlangues. Textes (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2000); Achim Aurnhammer, *Die deutsche Griselda: Transformationen einer literarischen Figuration von Boccaccio bis zur Moderne*. Frühe Neuzeit, 146 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010). The most useful survey of the many manifestations of the Griselda/Griseldis figure is provided by Judith Bronham, “Griselda,” *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis. Vol. 1 (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 376–82. For the reception of Boccaccio’s narrative in late-medieval Italian literature, see Thomas Klinkert, “Die italienische Griselda-Rezeption im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert,” *Die deutsche Griselda: Transformationen einer literarischen Figuration von Boccaccio bis zur Moderne*, ed. Achim Aurnhammer and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 55–72.

To return to our actual topic, of course, the thematic differences between both Middle High German tales cannot be overlooked, but the similarities also prove to be striking and outline fundamental concerns regarding ethics and morality. In both cases a prince falls in love with a peasant woman, although he does not admit that in public, or might not even be aware about it at first. There is no discussion in either story about the man's great need of the young woman's assistance, both in pragmatic and erotic terms. Insofar as both women shine forth through their honesty and naivete, they ultimately emerge as ideal characters. In neither story does the woman's lowly social status trigger the knight's love. Instead, the young women's extraordinary beauty, and furthermore also their thinly veiled love for the male protagonist achieve the desired goal. In both cases the male protagonist learns at the end the importance of basic human values, to some extent those already expressed in the Ten Commandments. Their reward consists of the unsuspected opportunity to marry the one woman whom they truly love and enjoy a life with her.

True happiness cannot be achieved by submitting to social rules and regulations, but rather, as both authors indicate, by pursuing the goal of finding true love wherever it might rest. Class distinctions do not mean much at all in this regard; instead, as Klaus Grubmüller has poignantly remarked, "Es ist deutlich, wie hier mit einfachen Mitteln ein neuer Akzent gesetzt wird: durch die Kontrastierung des unschuldigen Mädchens mit der abgebrühten Brautverkehrt sich das Schmunzeln über Naivität in Bewunderung für unschuldige Natürlichkeit" (It becomes clear how much the poet creates a new emphasis with simple means: by means of contrasting the innocent girl with the callous fiancée the smiling about naiveté transforms into admiration for innocent naturalness).⁴⁹ In this sense, both Hartmann von Aue's "Lord Henry" and the thirteenth-century anonymous verse narrative confirm that the idea of an erotic utopia closely associated with the rural world existed already in the Middle Ages.

Later writers hardly ever followed that model, and subsequent literary representations of peasants, male and female, strongly tended to resort to the satirical, if not sarcastic mode of expression, ridiculing the rural population altogether.⁵⁰ The best known examples would be Wernher der Gartenære's

⁴⁹ Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Märe – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), 142.

⁵⁰ Hilde Hügli, *Der deutsche Bauer im Mittelalter: dargestellt nach den deutschen literarischen Quellen vom 11.-15. Jahrhundert*. Sprache und Dichtung, Forschungen zur Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, 42 (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1929); Fritz Martini, *Das Bauerntum im deutschen Schrifttum: Von den Anfängen bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*. Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte. Buchreihe, 27 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1944); Lambertus Okken and Hans-Dieter Mück, *Die satirischen Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein wider die Bauern: Untersuchungen zum*

Helmbrecht (late thirteenth century), Heinrich Wittenwiler's biting peasant satire *Der Ring* (ca. 1400), and the large corpus of late-medieval Shrovetide plays.⁵¹ The famous South-Tyrolean poet Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) also formulated highly critical opinions about peasants at large, and his rural neighbors in his Alpine world near Brixen and Bozen. However, there are also some examples in his œuvre which indicate how much he felt deeply attracted to the outdoors, especially during Spring time when the experience of returning life after the long and cold winter made nature most attractive.⁵²

This comes to the fore a number of times, but probably most impressively in his song Kl. 76 "Ain graserin" (A grass cutting woman), partly based on the genre of the pastourelle, partly borrowing from the tradition of the marital song.⁵³ A man approaches a farm maid who is cutting fresh grass, offering his help, which she happily accepts. This help involves adjusting the gate, fixing the fence, and raking the grass, and the latter repeatedly. Of course, at closer analysis we easily

Wortschatz und zur literarhistorischen Einordnung. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 316 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981); Karl Brunner and Gerhard Jaritz, *Landherr, Bauer, Ackerknecht: der Bauer im Mittelalter : Klischee und Wirklichkeit* (Vienna: H. Böhlau Nachfolger, 1985); Ordelle G. Hill, *The Manor, the Plowman, and the Shepherd: Agrarian Themes and Imagery in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance English Literature* (Selinsgrove [PA]: Susquehanna University Press; London and Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993). See also my Introduction to the present volume.

⁵¹ Heinrich Wittenwiler, *Der Ring: Frühneuhochdeutsche / Neuhochdeutsch.* Nach dem Text von Edmund Wießner ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und herausgegeben von Horst Brunner (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991); for Wernher the Gardener's *Helmbrecht*, see note 11; for the genre of the Shrovetide plays, see Eckehard Simon, *Die Anfänge des weltlichen deutschen Schauspiels 1370–1530: Untersuchung und Dokumentation.* Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 124 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003).

⁵² Albrecht Classen, "Der Bauer in der Lyrik Oswalds von Wolkenstein," *Euphorion* 82.2 (1988): 150–67; see also the excellent commentary by Werner Marold, *Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, rev. and ed. by Alan Robertshaw. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft. Germanistische Reihe, 52 (1926; Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik, 1995).

⁵³ *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein.* Unter Mitwirkung von Walter Weiß und Notburga Wolf herausgegeben von Karl Kurt Klein. 3., neubearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage von Hans Moser, Norbert Richard Wolf und Notburga Wolf. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 55 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987); see now my English trans., Albrecht Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein: An English Translation of the Complete Works (1376/77–1445).* The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); for a useful critical introduction, see Johannes Spicker, *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Die Lieder.* Klassiker Lektüren, 10 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007). There are, however, a number of deplorable shortcomings, see my review in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* CXI.1 (2010): 108–09. See now the contributions to *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Leben - Werk - Rezeption*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011).

recognize the strongly sexual metaphors determining the entire song,⁵⁴ so when we listen to the third stanza:

Als ich den kle hett abgemät
und all ir lucken woverzeunt,
dannocht gert si, das ich jät
noch ainmal inn der nidern peunt;
ze lon wolt si von rosen winden,
binden mir ain krenzel.
“swenzel, renzel mir den flachs!

treut in, wiltu, das er wachs!”
“herz liebe gans, wie schön ist dir dein grensel” (19–27)

[After I had mowed the clover,
and after I had closed up all gaps in the fence,
she desired from me further that I should
weed one more time in the garden below.
As a reward she was willing to weave and bind
a wreath out of roses for me.
“Comb the flax for me, lift it up!
Take good care of it if you want it to grow”!
“Heart-beloved goose, what a pretty beak you have!”]⁵⁵

Very similar to the verse narrative with the little bunny rabbit, love and sexual fulfillment are suddenly presented as harmoniously joined with each other. However, there the erotic ideal is achieved only at the end, after the young knight has realized how little he can trust appearance and must guard himself against dissimulation on the part of his fiancée, in Oswald’s poem happiness and sexual satisfaction are intimately combined from the beginning. This utopia becomes realized in the nature setting, that is on the pasture, where man and

⁵⁴ Ulrich Müller, “Oswald von Wolkenstein: Ain graserin durch külen tau,” id., *Gesammelte Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft*. Vol. 1: *Lyrik des Mittelalters*, ed. Margarete Springeth, Gertraud Mitterauer, Ruth Weichselbaumer, et al.. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 750, I (1993; Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2010), vol. 3, 663–77.

⁵⁵ Kerstin Helmkamp, “Jenseits der Pastourelle,” *Mittelalterliche Lyrik: Probleme der Poetik*, ed. Thomas Cramer and Ingrid Kasten. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 134 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1999), 106–21; Wolfram Kossag and Stefanie Stockhorst, “Sexuelles und wie es zu Wort kommt: Die Frage nach dem Obszönen in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein,” *Daphnis* 28 (1999): 1–33; here 17–18; see also my introduction, “The Cultural Significance of Sexuality in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and Beyond: A Secret Continuous Undercurrent or a Dominant Phenomenon of the Premodern World? Or: The Irrepressibility of Sex Yesterday and Today,” *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 1–141; here 46–47.

woman—perhaps Oswald himself and his wife Margaret of Schwangau—meet, find each other highly attractive, and then engage in love making.⁵⁶

Happiness rules here, determined by sexual bliss which both partners freely exchange without either one being submitted under the other in social terms. Neither patriarchy nor misogyny show their ugly faces; instead the poet indicates in most explicit terms the true joys of marital union, freed from feudal constraints, which seems to be possible, however, only outside in nature. In remarkable contrast to the French tradition of the *pastourelle*, the element of sexual violence does not figure here; instead the two people happily meet on the meadow and enjoy each other in a sexual union.⁵⁷ The same observations can be made with regard to Oswald's song Kl. 21 "Ir alten weib" (You old women) in which freely enjoyable sexual unions are suddenly possible in the spring setting, where the birds jubilate and invite all creatures to share the wonders of rejuvenated life.

The poet openly implies how much the rural framework appeals to his inner instincts, although he also remembers the previous delights of his international travels (92–98). The concluding onomatopoeic verses, certainly borrowed from the world of the farm, that is, here in most concrete terms the chicken coop, indicate how much sexual pleasures play the greatest role, irrespective of any social conditions or relationship.⁵⁸ Oswald does not discuss marriage, although that might be implied at times; instead he projects the rural space, somewhat in analogy to Walther von der Vogelweide's "Under der linden," as the ideal location for the utopian realization of his dreams of love and sex.

Although the early modern age witnessed many bitter conflicts between the peasant class and the nobility, witness, for instance, the German Peasants' War 1524–1525,⁵⁹ we can also discover increasingly popular songs that idealize the

⁵⁶ Although there are no specific references to the figures acting in this poem, the context of Kl. 76 in the manuscripts A, B, and c, which focuses centrally on marital bliss, strongly suggests that the poet intended to create a kind of autobiographical setting, although he still relied on the genre of the *pastourelle*. See Albrecht Classen, "Liebesehe und Ehelieder in der Dichtung Oswalds von Wolkenstein," *Jahrbuch der Oswald-von-Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 5 (1988/89), 445–464; Spicker, *Oswald von Wolkenstein* (see note 53), ignores this aspect completely and speculates without any evidence that the female person is a "Landmädchen" (73; a country maid).

⁵⁷ Müller, "Oswald von Wolkenstein," 675–76 (see note 54). He rightly warns us to stay away from common evaluations of this and similar songs as morally depraved, or sordid. After all, Oswald's poem influenced other poets, it conforms pretty much to the standard versions of late-medieval German *pastourelle*, and it simply glorifies the delight in human sexuality.

⁵⁸ Albrecht Classen, "Love of Discourse and Discourse of Love in Middle High German *Minnesang*: The Case of the Post-Walther Generation from the Thirteenth- Through the Fifteenth Century," *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 347 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 359–78.

⁵⁹ *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents*, ed., trans., and with an introduction by Tom

farmer and present him as the essential, if not exclusive, producer of all food, hence as the one person who sustains everyone else, such as in Peter Frey's "Vom Edlen Bawman" in the *Ambraser Liederbuch* from 1582 (no. 133).⁶⁰ The same theme emerges also in the *Berner Liederbuch* from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (no. 36).⁶¹

Significantly, parallel to this tentative reevaluation of the peasant class, a number of anonymous poets projected the idealized peasant woman as the idyllic mistress, such as in "Ich weyß mir ein feins brauns meydelin" (no. 12) in the collection of *Gassenhawerlin und Reutterliedlin* from 1535.⁶² The same motif finds its realization in the song "Ich wais mir ein feins brauns mägetlein" (no. 150) in the *Heidelberger Liederhandschrift* from the middle of the sixteenth century.⁶³ In a very late representative of this genre of song collections, in the *Venus-Gärtlein* from 1656, the singer goes so far as to criticize and to ridicule the aristocratic courts altogether and to idealize the simple but true beauty of the country girls who do not don all that superfluous courtly clothing or jewelry — which they do not own anyway — and present themselves in their natural and honest character and charm.⁶⁴

As Max Wehrli had commented several decades ago, "Aus der höfischen Dame wird das 'feine braun Mäglein', Bäuerliches mischt sich selbstverständlich ein, . . . die Ehre des Mädchens wird zum Motiv . . ." (The courtly lady transforms into the 'fine, brown girl,' elements from the peasant world are mixed in as matter of fact, . . . the girl's honor becomes a motif . . .).⁶⁵ But we do not simply face a playful strategy here, intended to innovate the traditional courtly love discourse by way of simplifying or 'countrysizing' the traditional love discourse. Instead, the poets obviously picked up on the approach already pursued by Hartmann von Aue, the

Scott and Bob Scribner (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1991); Peter Blickle, *Der Bauernkrieg: die Revolution des Gemeinen Mannes*. Beck'sche Reihe: Wissen (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1989). See also the contribution to the present volume by Scott L. Taylor.

⁶⁰ *Das Ambraser Liederbuch vom Jahre 1582*, ed. Joseph Bergmann. Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, XII (1845; Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1971), 159–61. By the same token, this collection, like many others, also contains mocking songs about peasants, such as "Ein Lied von den uppigen Bawren" (no. 129). For further examples of negative and positive songs about peasants in early-modern German songbooks, see Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher*, 325 (see note 13), consult the Index for further examples of songs containing the theme of "Bauernlob."

⁶¹ Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher*, 94 (see note 13). This songbook is still not re-edited and can only be viewed in the city archive.

⁶² Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher*, 138 (see note 13).

⁶³ Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher*, 237 (see note 13).

⁶⁴ See my discussion of this song in Albrecht Classen and Lukas Richter, *Lied und Liederbuch in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Volksliedstudien, 10 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2010), 309.

⁶⁵ Max Wehrli, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im Mittelalter: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*. 3., bibliographisch erneuerte Auflage (1980; Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1997), 1077.

anonymous poet of the thirteenth-century verse novella, and then even by Oswald von Wolkenstein.

There is no reason to assume that early-modern audiences of these popular songs, mostly located in urban settings, but still also at the various courts, suddenly would have felt especially attracted to the peasant world in a pre-Romantic fashion.⁶⁶ All available evidence clearly speaks against such speculation. Nevertheless, we face in quite a number of cases the erotic idealization of the peasant girl/young woman, although in reality no one would have considered these female representatives of the lowest social class as particularly attractive. Crossing social barriers, especially by upshots, was generally viewed with great suspicion, or was simply rejected outright, as the earlier example of Wernher the Gardener's *Helmbrecht* (late thirteenth century) had dramatically communicated. Instead, the rustic women's appearance on the poetic stage clearly signals the search for an erotic utopia, and since this cannot be found at the courts, as Walther von der Vogelweide and Oswald von Wolkenstein had suggested in their respective songs, the only alternative proved to be nature and the countryside where the peasant girls operate.

Walther had not yet specified the social differences among the worthy and honorable ladies all that clearly; instead he insisted on pursuing a love that was given freely and would prove to be honorable, irrespective of the lady's rank and power, such as in his "Herzeliebe zwowelîn" (L 49, 25, or no. 26).⁶⁷ Oswald playfully included the peasant woman, without fully investing in that social utopia. However, in the case of Hartmann and of the anonymous author of the *mære* that very possibility was fully developed and presented as a concrete reality which everyone at court actually agreed with.

To conclude, we grasp in the innocent peasant daughter and in the simple village maid—whether noble or not—in her honorable character and inner strength, which empowers her to grant love, the early representative of the erotic ideal, the dream figure free of the traditional, social blemishes, the woman who extends her love irrespective of the man's economic, political, or family status, and who is even blind to his physical appearance. The 'fine, brown girl' of the late medieval and early modern folk poetry seems to be a far cry from Hartmann's peasant daughter,

⁶⁶ This does not mean that these songs were not popular among the peasant class, on the contrary. But we are well familiar with many of the scribes and collectors, with the poets and composers, and so we can be certain that this genre appealed strongly to the urban class and also to the members of noble courts.

⁶⁷ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche* (see note 34); see also Heike Sievert, *Studien zur Liebeslyrik Walthers von der Vogelweide*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 506 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1990), 43–58; Derk Ohlenroth, "Zum lyrischen Umfeld des Mädchenliedes Walther L. 49,25," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 128.1 (2009): 29–64.

yet the utopian ideal comes forth in her as well. Poets continued throughout the centuries to project the simple maid as the innocent, honest, beautiful, untarnished figure who was truly able to identify and live out what love could and should mean and stand for. Noticeably, however, this did not change the mostly negative view of male peasants, regularly described as contemptible, foolish, sinful people who cannot be trusted in any way—for a few and hard to find exceptions, see above (*Berner Liederbuch*). However, aristocratic authors at times indicated their willingness to accept the peasant woman if she met the specific demands and submissively adapted to the expectations of noble society, marrying the man who could thus profit from her, while she was tremendously elevated in social rank—again, see the later example of the famous ‘Griselda’ figure, such as in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. We are certainly dealing with double standards both in the verse narratives and in the various poems by Walther and Oswald, and also by numerous later composers of folk poetry, but on that conceptual basis at least, early inklings of an erotic utopia could be developed already in medieval literature.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ I’ll pursue that topic in terms of art-history in my contribution to this volume on *Books of Hours*.

Chapter 5

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Rural Space and Agricultural Space in the Old French *Fabliaux* and the *Roman de Renart*

As is the case with similarly broad concepts, the term “rural” proves to be useful and ubiquitous, if imprecise. Even numerous rural sociologists today admit that the term has several definitions. As we see throughout the present volume, the conceptualization and use of the term rural is drawn along different ideological, geographical, and temporal lines.¹ Recent attempts by sociologists and government policy makers to define the notion typically include measures of population density and measures of proximity to farms or urban environments.² In the Middle Ages, the rural was defined not only in opposition to the urban, but in opposition to the courtly and the clerical as well. Rural sociologists are often more concerned with relative rurality, that is, rurality measured in degrees, in which boundaries are fluid and populations are ever changing.

This was indeed the case with rural and agricultural spaces in the Middle Ages, particularly in thirteenth-century western Europe, a time and place in which cities were growing and urban environments, mindsets, and activities began to encroach further on the rural landscape. Although medieval literature does not offer a clearly defined distinction between rural and urban, popular contemporary texts provide representations of rural spaces and their inhabitants, lending valuable

¹ Related to the terms rural and rurality, see also Christopher Clason’s article in the present volume, for a helpful discussion of the terms “pastoral” and “nature.”

² Even today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s broadest definition of rural entails low population density and distance from urban centers, including “open country and settlements;” conversely, the U.S. government defines urban broadly as “densely settled territory,” and this is similar for other governments and disciplines:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/WhatIsRural/> (last accessed Feb. 19, 2012).

insight into contemporary perceptions of the rural. The extent to which a space may be qualified as rural (rather than urban, courtly, or liminal) also remains somewhat ambiguous and may also be measured in degrees in textual descriptions and manuscript miniatures of medieval popular narratives. Case in point: the narratives of thirteenth-century short comic tales of the Old French *fabliaux* and the comic beast epic of the *Roman de Renart* characterize rural space and agricultural space as marked by the same sorts of poverty, crime, greed and hunger seen in the urban sphere, and less as a bucolic pastoral image of farm life. Social satire and comic realism are the marks of both genres and it is within this critical context that medieval concepts of space and spatiality begin to emerge. The farm is not uniformly idealized in these genres, as it is in some of the other medieval European lyric and narrative poetry explored in this volume. Moreover, the two genres illustrate, like no other extant cultural production, the encroachment of the urban on the rural or the blurring of lines between farm, city, and court. Revisiting these texts with an eye to the rural may help us get closer to better mapping these two hard-to-define genres as well as such imprecise notions of space.

Even the Old French terms *vile* and *vilain*, also spelled *vilein*, were not themselves static and continued to evolve and signify different spaces and individuals over time, as they do in these two genres. The Old French *vile* may mean town, city, or village, but scholarship often overlooks that it may also denote in some cases, farmland. One meaning of *vilain* as with its Latin counterpart, *villanus*, a farmhand or worker on a *villa*, referred to peasants and farmers more than to city-dwellers or merchants from its first vernacular usage through the mid-thirteenth century, at least. *Fabliaux* with the term *vilain* in the title or first line are set in the countryside, but sometimes on the road to the marketplace or near a village.

In the *Roman de Renart*, *vile* is likewise used to describe bucolic farms in the countryside, where *viles* are often depicted as enclosed living and agricultural spaces with livestock, poultry, and crops, as demonstrated in the close reading of the passage from the *Roman de Renart* below, in which the *vile* is a rich farm located in a space surrounded by the forest (and is not, as some readers might expect, in or near a town). Moreover, the socio-economic problems related to their status as *vilains*, including lack of education, unemployment, poverty, and hunger, are common among these fictional characters, as they were, of course, for their real-life counterparts. If we consider that *vile* may also have indicated the rural as well, as it does below, we discover even further evidence of the concepts of urban and rural in this period. Though many scholars have long deemed the *fabliaux* and the *Roman de Renart* either urban, popular, or the opposite of the courtly literature they tend to mock, these tales present some of the harsh realities of rural life, as

discussed in the preceding chapters of the present volume, but often with a comic point of view.³

There is an extant French prose document from the Picardie region, dating from the late thirteenth century, that details physical appearance and character traits of the twenty-three types of *vilains* in this period,⁴ thus providing a contemporary typology of *vilain* nature and occupations, mostly of a pejorative nature. From this comic text, we may refer to a few that echo the unfavorable literary representations of such figures in the *fabliaux*, such as the following, in which the vilains are referred to as if in a bestiary, with farm animal names such as pigs, dogs, donkeys, and chickens (and is attributed adjectives such as ill-formed, ferocious, pure-bred, or cloven hoofed, etc.) to name just a few: The pig peasant is “Le vilain porcin est celui qui travaille dans les vignes et ne veut pas indiquer leur chemin aux passants, mais dit à chacun, ‘vous le savez mieux que moi’” [The porcine peasant is the one who works in the vineyards and will not give directions to a passerby, but says to everyone, ‘you know better than I].

The dog peasant (“Le vilain canin”) “est celui qui reste assis devant sa porte et se moque des gentilhommes qui passent . . .” (is the one who stays seated in front of his door and makes fun of people who pass by). The thick one is, “Le vilain pattue est celui qui porte des souliers serrés par une corde, et qui traînent sur le sol . . .” (The thick peasant is the one who wears footwear cinched up by a cord that drags on the ground). Le vilain double pattu est celui qui porte des hoseaux coupés qui ont des boutons par derrière . . .” (The doubly thick peasant is the one who wears cut pants that has buttons on the behind). Or the strong, gluttonous one is compared to a donkey: “Le vilain ânin est celui qui porte les gâteaux et le barril de vin à la fête . . .” (The donkey peasant is the one who carries the cakes and the barrel of wine to the party), and “Le vilain chapé est le pauvre clerc marié qui doit travailler les vignes avec les autres vilains” (The blanketed one is the poor married clerk who has to toil in the vineyards with the other vilains). Others include: “Le vilain accroupi est celui qui laisserait la charrue pour braconner les lapins du seigneur matin et soir” (the bent-over peasant is he who would leave the

³ Particularly the *fabliaux* have long been treated as a bourgeois genre, and were referred to by some scholars as *littérature bourgeoise*, or even as a bourgeois burlesque of courtly literature by Charles Muscatine, “The Social Background of the Old French Fabliau,” *Genre* 9 (1976): 1–19, though this is no longer the current view held by many scholars. Though it is of course devoid of Marxist connotations, a few *fabliaux* include the term *bourgeois* in their titles or narrative, for instance *La Bourgeoise d’Orliens* and *Les deux bourgeois et un vilain*. *Fabliaux* titles and citations are from the critical edition of: *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, ed. Willem Noomen (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988–1998) 10 vols.

⁴ The critical edition and modern French translation cited here is that of Achille Rubinal and Eloi Johanneau, eds. *Des XXIII manières de vilains* (Paris: Sylvestre, 1834), based on the manuscript BNF 7595. English translations are my own.

plough to go poach his master's rabbits day and night), or "Le vilain écrevisse est celui qui revient du bois chargé de bûches et entre en sa maison à reculons parce que la porte est trop basse" (The crayfish peasant is the one who, returning from the woods carrying logs, enters his house backwards, because the door is too low) and similarly péjorative animal-related descriptions.

Detailing both physical and mental traits in a negative fashion, this contemporary (what I would suggest could be termed) mock-bestiary text of rural people (though there are non-animal entries as well) in France presents a striking parallel with the anthropomorphism in the *Roman de Renart* and underlines the general disdain and mistrust of rural figures in both genres in popular and comic written cultural production of the time.

The two genres have much in common, I argue, not only in that they include rural, urban, and courtly settings and attitudes with a critical and comic point of view, but also in that both genres represent a world of suffering, in which survival depends on cleverness, trickery, greed, and luck. Narrators are cynical regarding human nature and pessimistically point out the inequalities of society. However, the moral stance is often ambiguous. Standing in opposition to courtly romance, the *fabliaux* and the *Roman de Renart* are popular, comic genres, focusing more on daily life and centering more on the everyman peasant figure of the *paysan* or *vilain* than on courtly themes or aristocratic characters. In this combined corpus of beast epic and human tales, more than in other contemporary literary genres, rural space shapes the identity of those who inhabit it, and demonstrates how space shapes daily lives in general.

Today, the discipline of rural sociology defines the rural as that which is not urban (with urban denoting a certain population density, often an arbitrary distinction); however, in the case of the *fabliau* and beast epic genres, the dialectic of city vs. country is not that simple. In addition, the rural is also contrasted with the courtly, the sacred, and the urban in both genres. The *fabliaux* show rural *mores* as different than urban social norms, and explore this contrast, often though humor. Presenting a discourse of everyday life in all social spheres, rural people and personified animals steal food and livestock and resort to elaborate trickery to survive in the country. But the rural is not always equated with poverty or ignorance in the two genres; within the rural, in both genres we see a range of social classes, from the rural aristocracy to rural poverty. Inequality is explored, as is the rise of the middle class and movement toward cities and city life.

A close reading of descriptions of physical rural space, roads, houses, gardens, orchards, and farms reveals contemporary perspectives on the rural. An overview of some of the *vilains*, peasants, and farmers, or their anthropomorphized animal

equivalents in the *Roman de Renart*.⁵ Rural space is represented in both literary text and image, depicting both the real and the imaginary. Spatiality and social hierarchies are inextricably linked in these narratives and the power play of social status is played out in these spaces. Indeed, these texts provide some comic glimpses of how food and agriculture, landscapes, and rural governance fit together.⁶

The *Roman de Renart*

The Old French beast epic of the *Roman de Renart* consists of approximately 80,000 lines, several manuscripts, and twenty-seven branches, composed and copied over nearly a century, circa 1170–1250.⁷ Well over five hundred miniatures illustrating the *Roman de Renart* are extant, many of which include scenes of rural life, farms, gardens, enclosures, wells, roads, chicken coops, and peasants interacting with animals. While animals are playing the roles of rural aristocrats, judges, clergy, and other central roles, humans are most often relegated to the margins of the farm and assigned the role of rural cultivator.

The beast epic depicts more rural versus courtly conflict than do most *fabliaux* (which more often show the opposition of rural versus urban). Rural sociologists today often investigate the nature of what is termed rural-metro interface or rural-urban interface. Indeed, this interface is one major theme of conflict in these genres, in which conflict is often located at the intersection of these two spaces and cultures and focused on the rural-urban clash. The essential social criticism is the failure of the dominant class to provide food for the hungry poor, and this realistic rural struggle for food and control of natural resources is played out as hungry animals search in vain for food while others enjoy copious meals.

Many different landscapes appear in the *Roman de Renart*; the bucolic side of the tales shows peaceful meadows, bountiful farms, and dense woods. The divide between rich and poor is evident in the lines between these spaces and the court. The *Roman de Renart* maps a range of landscapes and resources, from the unforgiving wilderness and liminal spaces of the forest, often depicted as on the

⁵ See Jodogne's study on the evolution of anthropomorphized animals, and the rural and agricultural spaces that they inhabit, useful to map better the rural in the Middle Ages in the context of this volume: Omer Jodogne, *Le Fabliau* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975).

⁶ I also envisage reading the medieval rural in these short tales in contrast to the urban and to the sacred. We may also see these spaces in contrast to sacred spaces, or to the Foucauldian "other" spaces; as Foucault has shown in this corpus and other contemporary literary texts, Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," *Architecture-Mouvement-Continuité* 5 (1984): 46–49.

⁷ The *Roman de Renart* editions cited here are: *Le roman de Renart: édité d'après le manuscrit O*, ed. Aurélie Barre (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

edge, on the road from farm to town. As Jodogne has pointed out, the anthropomorphic animals are pictured in the countryside or at court, but not in a bourgeois environment.⁸ There is general denunciation of hunger and unjust treatment and violence against the poor. In the *Roman de Renart* the country, agricultural setting is contrasted with the final scenes at court. It represents the lives of personified animals living within a hierarchy that goes from rural, barnyard farm animals to the aristocratic predators. Here rural space is mainly agricultural, with scenes in farms, barnyards, and homes. And here rural life is marked by actions motivated by hunger, poverty, and inequality.⁹

The *Roman de Renart* provides perhaps the most detailed literary descriptions of rural life, of the dispositions of the space of the farm, of peasants and their daily activities, painting a complete representation of rural life. In the following representative example, the rural farm is more than once described like a protected space, or even an impenetrable fortress, and peasants are described as cultivating a bountiful agricultural space, called a *vile*:

Sen vint corant a *une vile*.
 La vile seoit en un bos,
 Mout i ot gelines et cos,
 Anes, malarz, et jars et oes.
 Et mesire Costant des Noes,
 Uns vilain qui mout ert garniz,
 Manoit mout pres du plaiseiz.
 Plenteïve estoit sa meson
 De gelines et de chapons:
 Bien avoit garni son ostel,
 Assez i avoit un et el,
 Char salee, bacons et fliches,
 De ce estoit li vilains riches;
 Et mout estoit bien herbergiez,
 Tout environ ert li plaisiez.

⁸ Omer Jodogne, "L'anthropomorphisme croissant dans le *Roman de Renart*," *Aspects of the Medieval Animal Epic: Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain, May 1972*, ed. Edward Rombauts and Andries Welkenhuysen (Leuven: Catholic University of Leuven Press, 1975) 25–42; here 25.

⁹ On the literature of poverty in medieval and late medieval England and methodologies for reading poverty (and not just rural poverty) in texts and socio-historical context, see Kate Crassons's survey of representations and definitions of poverty, in which she explores images and narrative poems that demonstrate harsh economic realities and poor living conditions, for city dwellers, farm laborers, beggars, and others. Moreover, Crassons explains the need for literary texts and analyses in ongoing scholarly discussions about medieval poverty: "Literary texts are essential to the study of poverty because poverty is as much an economic force as it is an epistemological issue that challenges our ability to know and fix the precise nature of material reality," Kate Crassons, *The Claims of Poverty: Literature, Culture, and Ideology in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 5.

Moult i ot de bonnes cerises,
 Et plusors fruiz de maintes guises,
 Pomes i ot et autre fruit.
 Renart i va por son deduit.
 Son jardin estoit mout bien clos
 De piex de chiesne aguz et gros,
 Hordez estoit d'aubes espines.
 Dedenz avoit mis ses gelines
 Dant Costant por la forteresce.
 Et Renart cele part s'adresce:
 Tout coïement, le col bessié
 S'en va tot droit vers le plessié.
 Moult fu Renart en grant porchas,
 Mes la force des espinars
 Le trestorne de son afere
 Si qu'il n'en set a quel chief trere;
 Ne por luitier ne por saillir
 As gelines ne puet venir.
 Acroupiz s'est en mi la voie,
 Moult se doute que l'en nel voie.

(*Roman de Renart* vv. 1212–46, emphasis my own)

[He took off running to a farm. The farm was next to the woods. It was well stocked with animals and feed. There were chicks, roosters, donkeys, ducks, nighthawks, and geese. Mr. Constant is a very rich peasant who is working near there. His household was full of hens and capons: so well had he provisioned the house, that he had enough of this and that and salted meats, bacon and other foods, so that this was a rich *vilain*, who lived very well, and kept such a good household that everything around him pleased him. There were many good cherry trees there, and many other kinds of fruits. There were apples and other fruit trees. Renart goes there to take some. The garden was closed and well protected by an enclosure with hedges and spiny bushes. Inside those, the Constant put all of his, like a fortress. Renart went there cautiously, neck down, the spiny bushes and hedges, stealthily in full pursuit but bothered by the painful bushes, so much so that he is able to neither attack nor pounce on the chicks in the enclosure and must go away with his head down] [Translation my own].

The coveted agricultural space is thus shown next to the fearful wilderness of the woods, described as an idyllic enclosure full of barnyard animals, poultry, and livestock. The description of this rural space is bountiful, with copious fruit and foliage, live animals, and ample stores of food. It stands in sharp contrast to the animals that were starving to the death in the forest, in branch eight (v. 3683) and elsewhere, that were “dying of hunger,” all around him.

Often in the *Roman de Renart*, action is set in the space of the rural pasture. It is a bucolic pastoral scene of simple rural life, interrupted by hunger and violence.

The rural meadows of sheep are likened to the paradise of Adam and Eve in the prologue branch. In another branch, Renart and Ysengrin, his nemesis the wolf, discover a flock of sheep grazing on a hill. Salivating as he imagines the taste of lamb, Renart plots that Ysengrin will put on shepherd's clothing to trick the guard dogs with his scent, and then catch the newborn lambs when they hear their supposed master calling. However, Renart knows full well that when Ysengrin calls, the sheep will panic at the wolf's howls and the dogs will chase his accomplice, allowing Renart instead to grab sheep for his own dinner. Thus, those that exhibit cunning and cleverness will survive, and eat well, in the bleak and hungry rural world.

To some extent, then—even though all the animals are technically nobles and Renart mocks human *vilains* and steals from farmers—the figure of the extraordinary Renart seems to represent the rural poor (though he himself is a baron and a member of the poorer rural aristocracy), ready to do anything to survive, while Ysengrin represents the richer bourgeoisie, from whom he may steal, and Brun and others represent the nobility. Several manuscript images show peasant farmers chasing and beating Renart. The animals often clash with local peasant farmers, termed *paysan* or *vilain* in the text, as for example in branch fourteen, when Primaut le loup is attacked and then chases the peasant “qui est mordu aux fesses” [who is bitten on his behind]. The peasants are usually shown in a predominantly outdoor rural environment, working in the garden, tending the land or preserving food, or going to the market; we also find them at home eating at the table. Their farms and cellars are usually well provisioned and well protected, and the target of the hungry animals, who surround and threaten them on the margins of their land and threaten their wealth and power—here perhaps a comic satire of social inequality as well as a representation of the real rural threats animals posed to gardens and livestock.

In a branch in which the clever fox tries to outsmart a greedy *arriviste* farmer named *Bertaud*, we have a rich description agricultural rural space, to paraphrase: the farm space is on the edge of the woods. The roads are not good and not meant for a fox to travel on, anyway. First we see prairie land, then farmland. The prairie is described as pleasant, lush, and bountiful. As for the farm, “c’est le paradis terrestre,” an earthly paradise, with lots of water, flowers, wood, hills. It is full of life, and hunting is abundant and easy. The fields are green and the flowers smell good.

Hunger brings Renart from the woods to this rural space. There is nowhere more pleasant than this, he thinks to himself. Renart spies the farm of the richest *vilain*, this side of Troyes, full of fruit trees and all the livestock and food of one's hungriest and greediest dreams, “abundantly provisioned with everything that it is possible to desire in the country: bulls and cows, ewes and sheep, chicks, capons, eggs, and milk,” (translation my own). As with so many of the private

vegetable gardens illustrated in the extant corpus, this garden of plenty is closed and well-protected with pointy sticks, deep wells, and a ditch full of water. This *vilain* is described, similarly to some of the *vilains* in the XXIII *manières de vilains* typology discussed above, as: unsubtle, very greedy, and wanting to increase his wealth. He preferred to keep his chickens and roosters rather than put them in a pot but he sold some each week at the market. However, the rural aristocrat Renart has a better idea of what to do with the hens he's saving up. While the *vilain's* wife was gone to town to sell something and the boys were out working in the fields, the hungry Renart stalks the chicken from behind an impenetrable bushy hedge next to a stream of collected rain water. This scene describes much about not only the use of rural space, but also life and work in the rural environment.

The Old French *Fabliaux*

An overview of *fabliaux* rurality is useful before returning to a comparison of the two related genres. The *fabliaux* include over one hundred fifty extant short verse narratives, composed circa 1159–1340. In his discussion of *fabliau* taxonomy, Norris Lacy reminds us that genre not a medieval term and the lines are not strictly drawn.¹⁰ The average length of a short narrative *fabliau* tale is roughly similar to a branch of the *Roman de Renart*, with outliers that are very brief. First defined by Joseph Bédier as, “contes à rire en vers,” [tales of laughter in verse] the *fabliaux* zoom in on aspects of everyday life in the country and the city through a comic lens.¹¹ It is generally agreed that most *fabliaux* were composed for a largely bourgeois, city-dwelling, merchant-class audience (though there were certainly courtly audiences as well).

Though the *fabliaux* are often characterized as an urban genre by scholars, they are not only set in cities, but also deal with human nature and daily life in rural and agricultural settings as well. Jodogne suggests that the *fabliaux* are close to being historically accurate in their portrayal of the rural world; conversely, Bianciotto situates the genre in a specifically “urban context.”¹² Vàrvaro compromises in his typology of the extant texts of the genre, dividing the corpus

¹⁰ Norris J. Lacy, *Reading the Fabliaux* (New York: Garland, 1998).

¹¹ Joseph Bédier, *Les fabliaux* (Paris: Champion, 1893). 39.

¹² Jodogne, *Le Fabliau* (see note 5). Gabriel Bianciotto, “Le fabliau et la ville,” *Third International Beast Epic, Fable, and Fabliaux Colloquium* (Cologne: Böhlman, 1981), 43–65; here 43. For more on the historical context in France, roughly around the time of composition, see Marc Bloch, *French Rural History: An Essay in its Basic Characteristics*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

into *fabliaux citadini* and *fabliaux contadini*, or city narratives and country narratives.¹³ A critical compromise is indeed in order, as the *fabliaux* depict urban, country, and other spaces. Descriptions of the rural include elements of realism that would no doubt be familiar to most rural and urban contemporary audiences alike.

Charles Muscatine's study of the *fabliaux* situates the genre particularly in a time of growing populations of cities that depended on rural agriculture. He sees the interaction between rural and urban at the center of the *fabliaux*. Rural and urban poverty and debt and the fluidity of social status are a focus for Muscatine. However, Muscatine emphasizes the upwardly-mobile nature of the *vilain* and the growth of the bourgeois society of the cities as more central to the *fabliaux* than do other *fabliau* scholars, such as Brian Levy, who takes issue with this point of view and suggests more complexity to the *fabliaux*.¹⁴

The lower social class of *vilain* existed in both rural and urban settings, but usually refers to a farmer or similar status. Most *fabliaux* characters are farmers or merchants, with a few knightly and priestly outliers. Many characters live in poverty, such as the poor woodcutters, poor farmers, poor donkey drivers, rural clergy, and others that populate the rural side of the *fabliaux* world. Some of the rural poor are depicted with aspirations of social mobility or with greedy and covetous natures, as they attempt to dupe or steal from the rich. Nearly a fourth of the titles (or opening lines) of the extant *fabliaux* refer to a rural occupation and *vilain* (or upwardly-mobile *vilain*) status, such as: the *Le vilain asnier* [The Peasant Mule Driver], *Le vilain mire* [The Peasant Surgeon] and *Le Vilain qui conquist paradis* . . . [The Peasant that Conquered Paradise] and many others.

Some *fabliaux* narrators highlight what they suggest is realism, or their own self-proclaimed true portrayals of socio-economic hardships and famine. Case in point: as to be expected in this period, the *Vilain de Baileul* narrator, Jean Bodel, claims the tale is true. This is a portrait we see repeated with variation in several *fabliaux*, with a poor, hungry, ugly, ignorant, and cuckolded farmer, in a rural context that the narrator, in a common trope, claims to be true-to-life:

Se fabliaux puet veritez estre,
Dont avint il, ce dist mon mestre,
C'uns vilains Bailluel manoit.
Formenz et terres ahanoit,
N'estoit useriers ne changiere.
Un jor, a eure de prangiere,

¹³ Alberto Vàrvaro, "I *fabliaux* e la società," *Studio Mediolatini e Volgari* 8 (1960): 275–99; here 287.

¹⁴ Brian Joseph Levy reevaluates Muscatine's traditional stance introduced in his 1976 article here; the above citation is Levy on Muscatine's point of view by Brian Joseph Levy, *The Comic Text: Patterns and Images in the Old French Fabliaux* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi 2000), 14.

Vint en meson mout fameilleus,
 Il estoit granz et merveilleus
 Et maufez et de laide hure.

...

Ez vous le vilain qui baaïlle
 Et de famine et de mésaise

(vv. 1–9 and 20–21).

[This fabliau may be true, for so it came to me, so my master told me, about this one *vilain*, who came from Bailleul. He worked the land and tended to his grain, for he was not a usurer or money-lender. One day, he came back to the house very hungry. He was big and marvelous and strong, but rustic and ugly. And thus came the peasant that was groaning of hunger and pain, translation my own.]

This *vilain* is described as rural, essentially in terms of his physical manual labor, and in opposition to the urban, since he does not have an urban occupation, such as money-lending, as the narrator suggests. Moreover, the description above shows that he is strong, hardy, hard-working, and nonetheless suffering and dying of hunger.

About forty, of the approximately one hundred fifty, extant *fabliau* are about *vilains*, with several describing farmers similar to the *Vilain de Baileul* above, and others with rural occupations. Several brief yet varied examples of such central rural figures suffice to paint the picture of *fabliau* rural figures, long neglected by literary historians. From the settings and the actors who move about in them, we see that the *fabliaux* are far from being a bourgeois urban genre; for instance, in *Du Segretain moine* (The Sacristan Monk), Farmer Thibaut's manure pile is the scene of the clever rural comedy of errors. In *De la demoiselle qui n'ot parler de fotre qui n'aüst mal au coeur*, there are farmhands with dirty mouths who curse and swear and harass the girl with graphic sexual language until (so the father believes) she is sick to her stomach. In the *Vilain au buffet*, the farmer has calluses and blisters on his hands from working in the field, and cautiously guards his hard-earned foodstuffs.

Landowning farmers and hired farmhands also appear in *Estula*, in a portait of farmer and son who live off the land. In *Estula*, an ignorant farmer believes he owns a talking dog and needs the priest to verify. In this same tale, two poverty-stricken brothers attempt to rob the poor farmer of sheep and cabbages, due to their extreme hunger and suffering, the narrator tells us. In the *Du meunier et les deux clerks* [The Miller and the Two Clerks], we see that rural people do not have many household possessions, as the rural miller is poor and his daughter sleeps in a trunk.

The *fabliau* rural inhabitants are often portrayed not only as greedy, but often as naïve and gullible, trying to get something for nothing or to climb social hierarchies but often failing. For example, in *Brunain, ou La vache au prêtre* [Brunain, or the Priest's Cow]: a rural clergy member tells a poor, gullible *vilain*

and his wife they will receive double what they give in the name of God. The poor farmer couple go back to their stable, retrieve their old milk cow, that is almost out of milk and nearly worthless, they reason, and give it to the priest, who then attaches it to his own cow in the enclosure for the proud safe-keeping of his easily obtained prize. The next day, the peasant's cow saunters down the road to the home that it knows well as it pulls the second animal with it, thus fulfilling the supposed prophecy. The lucky peasants lament that their stable might be too small for two cows. The tale gives a valuable glimpse of abuse of power, socio-economic inequality, and rural poverty.

Poverty, hunger, crime, violence and inequality are rampant in the rural spaces of the *fabliaux*, narratives that often weigh in on the inequality of the gap between rich and poor.¹⁵ Moreover, the *vilain* is portrayed as an ignorant country bumpkin. In *Estula* [Are-you-there the Dog] (vv. 2–18) two starving *vilain* brothers, who live in the country, aim to steal sheep and cabbage from a richer local farmer, to paraphrase the discussion of rural life and poverty in this salient example: poverty was the brothers' close friend, for it was often with them. It is the thing that makes those it haunts suffer the most; there is no worse illness. One night the brothers are pushed to the edge of hunger, thirst and cold, all the evils that attach themselves to those whom poverty holds in its power.

They ponder how to defend themselves from the poverty that attacked them (vv. 1–8, translation my own). They are motivated by hunger to steal cabbages and sheep from a neighboring farmer. But the two hungry brothers are ignorant and easily tricked, again reinforcing the *fabliaux* stereotype of rural people as poverty-stricken, ignorant, and desperate. Rural poverty is again equated with ignorance and gullibility, as *Les deux bourgeois et un vilain*, in which the merchant-class men refer to the *vilain* as stupid as an animal and suggest finding a way to teach this ignorant man. If the city-dweller is characterized by greed and corruption, then this rural inhabitant is treated with pejorative language and is characterized by poverty and ignorance or cunning, as are others located in rural space in this corpus.

In addition, the conflict between rich and poor and issues of taxation are taken up in *La vie[i]lle qui graissa la patte du chevalier* [The Woman who Greased the Knight's Palm] (translation of title my own), in which an ignorant woman in financial trouble turns to a friend for advice, and verbal and physical comedy

¹⁵ See Tracy's article on images of excessive violence and torture in the *fabliaux* in Larissa Tracy, "The Uses of Torture and Violence in the Fabliaux: When Comedy Crosses the Line," *Florilegium* 23.2 (2006): 143–68. Albrecht Classen's definitive volume on violence in medieval culture investigates violence in other contemporary genres from an interdisciplinary perspective: *Violence in Medieval Courtly Literature: A Casebook*. ed. Albrecht Classen (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

ensues when she takes the suggestion to bribe and flatter the tax collector and “butter him up,” all too literally. What is more, the contrast between urban and rural is not the only opposition presented. The rural and the courtly also clash, in tales such as *Le vilain mire*, as they criticize the ignorance and poverty of the *vilain* and *paysan* and the mistrust those of other social milieux have of them.

Conclusions

As we remap these short narratives to include the vast rural spaces and their inhabitants, long neglected by scholarship, we bring to light further powerful representations of poverty, hunger, greed, inequality, and food stealing that plague the otherwise idyllic rural space of the two genres. There is also a social stigma attached to poverty that is scrutinized. Finally, we discover a complex, comic social roadmap of rural, urban, and other in-between spaces. The rural is a continuum in these tales, that may be measured in geographic and demographic degrees and in textual nuances, as illustrated in the examples above, and many similar examples throughout both genres.

In summary, the *fabliaux* focus more on the characterizing the rural mindset, while in contrast, the *Roman de Renart* focuses primarily on the describing the details of rural spaces. The *fabliaux* draw a contrast between the rural and urban spheres, while the *Roman de Renart* paints a picture of the inhabitants of the marginal space between the farm and the woods, the rich world of the court and the poor world of the country. Social satire and corrective commentary of socioeconomic inequalities are apparent in portrayals of rural interactions.

Moreover, in comparing and contrasting representations of the rural across these two genres, that are otherwise similar in many ways, we may generalize that the *Roman de Renart* descriptions of rural and agricultural space focus on farms and living conditions therein, including animals, property, diet, and work, whereas the *fabliaux* tend toward the portrayal of attitudes of and about rural inhabitants themselves, focusing less on human nature than on the relation of humans to the rural landscapes. While we cannot fully apply today’s sociological notions of the rural to what rural meant in the Middle Ages, by looking at the descriptions such as those cited above and others, we gain a better understanding of rural life in exploring the cultural production that it depicts, through both the realistic and the imaginary.

In mapping the rural landscape painted by the *Roman de Renart* and unpacking the rural ethos shared by the many *vilain* figures of the *fabliaux*, patterns emerge in descriptions of rural and agricultural spaces and in rural mindsets. Reality and rurality also emerge in these otherwise imaginative and comic narratives. In conclusion, in its exploration of rural and agricultural life, the *Roman de Renart*

focuses on rural *spaces*, while the *fabliaux* focus on rural people. It is in the very nature of the *fabliaux* to concentrate more on human nature in general than on other details. Most rural *fabliaux* characters fail to escape their rusticity, no matter how economically upwardly mobile they are, no matter how courtly their intentions, how urban their activities may be. True, the *fabliau* rural figure is often shown as ill-mannered, ignorant, greedy, uneducated, foul-mouthed, and sometimes hirsute, malodorous, or rough-handed, but it often cleverly dupes the rich and sometimes happily lives off the land, blissfully ignorant and far from the corruption of the city or the court.

Chapter 6

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Moor, Court, and River in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*

1. The Nature of the Text

Of the eleven Welsh tales known together as *The Mabinogion*, the perennial favorite is the quartet on love, danger, and the supernatural called the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*. These twelfth-century narratives have, with the seven other stories, gained readers ever since Charlotte Guest (1812–1895) first published and translated them in 1838–1849. This popularity brought the *Four Branches* academic notice as early as 1867, when (in his *On the Study of Celtic Literature*) the poet and critic Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) perceived in them the remains of Celtic myth, noble in its ruin, but (he implied) with secrets to be found by astute researchers. Debate on the tales continues even now. One recent study deals with their manuscripts, provenance, dating, folklore, and supposed monastic links.¹ Others discuss their compilation or Irish borrowings.² This attention is deserved, for the society represented in them, although nominally that of ancient Britain, is not archaic but modern, being that of the early twelfth century when the tales were written. The *Four Branches* thus hold up a close and circumstantial mirror to Welsh court life in the age of Henry I (1100–1135), including details of royal negotiation and decision-making in time of war or peace.³

¹ 150 Jahre “Mabinogion”: Deutsch-Walisische Kulturbeziehungen, ed. Bernhard Maier and Stefan Zimmer (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001).

² Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature* (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2009); Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³ Andrew Breeze, “Warlords and Diplomats in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*,” *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 8 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011),

So material abounds in the *Four Branches* on the Welsh ruling classes and feasting, hunting, marriage, diplomacy, legal redress, provision of estates, politics, territorial gains, battle, and sudden death. In contrast to that is Celtic paganism, on which (despite the claims of enthusiasts) they effectively say nothing.⁴ Thoughtful observers now accept this, thanks to a swirl of criticism from French, British, and US scholars that has swept speculation away.⁵ Yet, if the stories are silent on heathen gods and goddesses, they have much to say on men and women, and on Wales itself. Their author knew well the landscape of Gwynedd in north-west Wales and (slightly less so) that of Dyfed in the south-west. Vaguer are the regions beyond, with Glamorgan and Gwent to the south-east, and then Dublin, Hereford, Oxford, London, and Kent, or even (by allusion) North Britain, with the Roman Wall of Antoninus and the river Clyde.

Analysis of perceptions of landscape or rural space in Wales thus brings us near the author of the narratives, who was clearly at home with life at the highest social level in Gwynedd and Dyfed, but less so in the world beyond. Of places mentioned in the *Four Branches*, I have chosen eleven for discussion here. In the first branch are Glyn Cuch and Arberth (with its mound), Gwawl fab Clud "Wall son of Clyde," the Preseli Hills, and Teyrnnon's court in Lower Gwent. In the second are Harlech and the mysterious Irish river "Llinon." In the third is Dyfed; and in the final branch Pryderi's court at Rhuddlan Teifi, Ardudwy, and Lleu's court at Mur y Castell. All inform us on the sure response of the author of the tales to real places, but commentary on them also brings out the varying responses of modern scholars.

II. The First Branch, the Tale of Pwyll

This branch begins crisply and matter-of-factly with a statement of territorial authority. It tells us that Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed, was lord over the seven cantrefs (= hundreds) of Dyfed, that Arberth was a chief court of his, and that one day he went hunting within his domain at Glyn Cych. (He there encounters the King of the Other World, to which he is transported for a year and a day in the tale's first adventure.) Dyfed, at the time equivalent to all of modern Pembrokeshire and

155–69. See also *Companion Tales to the Mabinogi: Legend and Landscape of Wales*, trans. John K. Bollard (Llandysul: Gomer, 2007).

⁴ Andrew Breeze, "Some Critics of the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*," *Constructing Nations, Reconstructing Myth: Essays in Honour of T. A. Shippey*, ed. Andrew Wawn (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), 155–66.

⁵ K. H. Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), 81–133; Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, "Introduction," *Arthurian Literature XXI: Celtic Arthurian Material*, ed. Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 1–8.

western Carmarthenshire, was bordered by the river Teifi in the north and Tywi in the east. Glyn Cuch is easily found. It is the river, running north into the Teifi, which to this day separates Pembrokeshire from Carmarthenshire. This is where Pwyll's adventures begin, when, early in the morning, he arose and "came to Glyn Cuch to loose his dogs into the wood" ("dyuot y Llynn Cuch i ellwng e gwn dan y coet"). He sounded his horn, mustered the hunt, followed the dogs, and lost his companions; and, while he was listening to the cry of his pack, he heard the cry of another pack, and they came to meet his own.⁶

The valley of the Cuch is wooded and secluded to this day. Guide-books variously comment on this slightly mysterious place. In the nineteenth century, one said somewhat unctuously of the parish of Maenordeifi (where Aber-cuch is) that "The vicinity is ornamented with several gentlemen's seats; and the adjoining country is richly wooded, and affords some fine views of the vales of Teivy and Cych, which here unite, abounding with features of romantic beauty." It continues with proprietor's-eye remarks on country houses "embosomed in flourishing plantations" or "beautifully situated" groves where "grounds comprehend some rural and romantic scenery."⁷ A century later, a Welshman was both evocative and practical: "The country around is rich in legends. The lanes are narrow and drop with alarming steepness into hidden valleys."⁸ Others remark on how "the woods close in, and the valley becomes a place for the walker, not the motorist", cite the tale of Pwyll, and conclude that the whole area "has a feeling of remoteness from the ordinary world."⁹ A recent volume is more bland, stating merely that the "delightful Cych valley features in *The Mabinogion*."¹⁰ For some the area is agreeable, for others, uncanny. But, with thick woods and deep valleys, it would be a place both for finding game and for losing one's way. The medieval author's perceptions were exact.

Now for Arberth and its mound or *gorsedd*, figuring in the first and third branches. This requires a little more thought. We meet it in the tale's second sentence and again after Pryderi's return from the Other World:

⁶ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (New York: Dutton, 1949), 3; *Pwyll Pendewic Dyuet*, ed. R. L. Thomson (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 1. See also the contributions to this volume by Abigail P. Dowling and Marilyn L. Sandidge, and consult also the Introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

⁷ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, 3rd ed. (London: S. Lewis and Co., 1844), II, 191–92.

⁸ Vyvyan Rees, *Shell Guide to South-West Wales* (London: Faber, 1963), 13.

⁹ Wynford Vaughan-Thomas and Alun Llewellyn, *The Shell Guide to Wales* (London: Michael Joseph, 1969), 66.

¹⁰ Anon., "Manordeifi," *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales*, ed. John Davies, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines, and Peredur Lynch (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 535.

A threigylgueith yd oed yn Arberth, prif lys idaw, a gwled darparedic idaw, ac yniuerod mawr o wyr y gyt ac ef. A guedy y bwyta kyntaf, kyuodi y orymdeith a oruc Pwyll, a chyrchu penn gorssed a oed uch law y llys, a elwit Gorsedd Arberth.¹¹

[And once upon a time he was at Arberth, a chief court of his, with a feast prepared for him, and great hosts of men along with him. And after the first sitting Pwyll arose to take a walk, and made for the top of a mound which was above the court and was called Gorsedd Arberth.¹²

Comment on the mound's whereabouts shows confusion. The favorite has been the town of Narberth (which lends its name to Narberth, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania), near Tenby in south Pembrokeshire. This is done on the not-very-logical grounds that Narberth is easy to find on the modern map, unlike Nant Arberth, near Cardigan in south Ceredigion. The evidence is as follows. Above Nant Arberth and marked on Ordnance Survey maps is a mound called Banc-y-Warren, which must be ancient, because the main Cardigan-Aberystwyth road bends round it. It has been passed by travellers for centuries, and is particularly visible in being at the summit of a pointed hill which can be seen for miles around. This is how the nineteenth century saw it. It is in the parish of Llangoedmor, "a district abounding with timber of ancient and luxuriant growth, and with groves of stately oaks and other trees, for the number and beauty of which the immediate vicinity is eminently distinguished. Soon after the death of Henry I, a memorable battle was fought near Crûg Mawr, a conical hill in the parish, with the Welsh, commanded by Gruffydd ab Rhys, and the English, in which the latter sustained a signal defeat."¹³ The place was famous before that, for it figures as a Wonder of Britain in the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, cited by Sir John Lloyd, who mentioned Crug Mawr and "the conical hill, still a conspicuous object in the landscape around Cardigan, which legend associated with the cure of melancholy."¹⁴ But he said nothing on it as the mound of Arberth, where Pwyll witnessed strange events. Sir Ifor Williams was sure that Pwyll's court was at Narberth, Pembrokeshire.¹⁵

Against him, W. J. Gruffydd (in a rare flash of scepticism) observed that the stronghold of rulers in that locality was Tenby; Narberth was never a chief court even of its own cantref (= district), let alone Dyfed. He opted for the northern Arberth.¹⁶ Robert Thomson noted the difficulty pointed out by Gruffydd.¹⁷ The

¹¹ *Pwyll Pendueic Dyuet*, ed. Thomson (see note 6), 7–8.

¹² *The Mabinogion*, trans. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (see note 6), 9.

¹³ Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary* (see note 7), II, 41–42.

¹⁴ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911), 260, 473.

¹⁵ *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, ed. Ifor Williams (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1930), 93.

¹⁶ W. J. Gruffydd, *Rhiannon: An Inquiry into the Origins of the First and Third Branches of the Mabinogi* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1953), 18.

¹⁷ *Pwyll Pendueic Dyuet*, 24 (see note 6).

fame of the spot is suggested further by a reference to Crug Dyfed in a praise-poem on Cynan Garwyn, ruler of Powys (east central Wales) and father of the Selyf killed at the battle of Chester in 613 (or 615). It would allude to conflict on this strategic coastal route, with a crucial river-crossing at Cardigan, long before Gruffydd ap Rhys's encounter with Normans in 1136. The bard mentions battle in Crug Dyfed, and Aergol on the move, where Aergol or Agricola was the ruler of Dyfed, father of the Voteporix who suffered the invective of Gildas in about 540, and whose monument is on show in Carmarthen Museum.¹⁸ Sir Ifor Williams thought Crug Dyfed was unidentified.¹⁹ So did Joseph Clancy.²⁰

But there is reason to take it as Crug Mawr, an obvious feature in Dyfed's landscape, and on a strategic route. As for Banc-y-Warren, at its summit and on a kink in the A487 two miles east of Cardigan, this was accepted as the mound of Arberth by me, using information from Geraint Gruffydd of Aberystwyth.²¹ Despite that, Sioned Davies states that Arberth "is usually equated" with Narberth, Pembrokeshire, so she discounts the northern place, without saying why.²² An encyclopedia declares that the Pembrokeshire Narberth "is mentioned in the second sentence of the first branch" of the *Mabinogi*.²³ More recently, I argue again for Arberth, Ceredigion.²⁴ Count Tolstoy quotes Gruffydd but is inconclusive on the matter.²⁵ Patrick Sims-Williams, despite two pages of discussion, says of Arberth's location merely that it is "debated."²⁶ So it may be said without equivocation that Arberth must be the northern place, not the southern one, for it possessed a mound famous in tradition and situated in a highly visible place, as the southern Arberth did not.

From that mound Pwyll witnesses the passage of a mysterious rider, Rhiannon. Eventually they meet and are betrothed. Their true love does not run quite smoothly, for at the betrothal appears Gwawl son of Clud, Rhiannon's unloved suitor, and Pwyll finds that thanks to a rash promise he has given his beloved to Gwawl. What concerns us here is the other man's name. The Rev. A. W. Wade-Evans (1875–1964) pointed out in 1934 that it means "Wall son of Clyde" and was a jibe at North British kinsfolk in Strathclyde, living by the river Clyde and the

¹⁸ I. Ll. Foster, "The Emergence of Wales," *Prehistoric and Early Wales*, ed. id. and Glyn Daniel (London: Routledge, 1965), 213–35.

¹⁹ *The Poems of Taliesin*, ed. Ifor Williams (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968), 22.

²⁰ J. P. Clancy, *The Earliest Welsh Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 23.

²¹ Andrew Breeze, *Medieval Welsh Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), 69.

²² *The Mabinogion* trans. Sioned Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 230.

²³ Anon., "Narberth," *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia* (see note 10), 590.

²⁴ Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the "Four Branches of the Mabinogi"* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2009), 18.

²⁵ Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature* (see note 2), 130.

²⁶ Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence* (see note 2), 60 n. 59.

Wall of Antoninus (not Hadrian's).²⁷ His suggestion has not been much noticed. Pennar Davies (1911–1996), theologian, patriot, and prisoner of conscience, ignored it, instead declaring, "It is evident that there are myths of nature somewhere behind these stories, and the same conclusion is implicit in names like 'Gwawl.'" ²⁸ (Did he see myths in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also with a character called "Wall"?) So it may be said that in Gwawl we should perceive, not mythology, but a reflection of the author's tart humor. A ludicrous character has a ludicrous name.

However, even the appellation of a rival in love has a geopolitical significance, if a comic one (for after a year and a day Gwawl is outwitted and subjected to humiliating defeat, by being kicked and trampled with scraps of food in a bag). The last stronghold of the North Britons, who spoke Cumbric (a sister-language of Welsh) until about 1100, was the Kingdom of Strathclyde. In the early eleventh century it went into decline, eventually being absorbed into the Kingdom of Scotland.²⁹ By the early twelfth century the North Britons were, for some in Wales, no more than a subject for quaint mockery. Gwawl son of Clud is therefore the first comic Scotsman in literature of any kind, though his absurd name still attests the author's awareness of Celtic tradition, and (less expectedly) political space.

Arberth was a royal court. The Preseli Hills are a place where royalty finds itself under threat. Pwyll has married the noble maiden Rhiannon and they are happy. Their barons are not. They love their lord and foster-brother, but after three years begin to feel "sorrow" or heaviness of heart at seeing him childless, and summon him to Preseli in Dyfed. They are blunt. They tell him that he is not as young as others, urge him to take a wife who will give him heirs, and warn him that, if he is reluctant, they will not endure it. Pwyll calmly talks them into giving him a year's respite (by the end of which Rhiannon has had a son).³⁰ The hills of this interesting political event are in central Pembrokeshire, and gain dusty opinions from some topographers. Lewis wrote of their "bare and sterile aspect, dreary in its appearance."³¹

Sir John Lloyd spoke of them as "the scene of many a romantic story" (he did not reflect that Pwyll might find nothing romantic in intimidation by barons).³² Less enthusiastic is the comment "Sixty inches of rain a year. Bleak moorland of sparse heather, gorse, boulders and bog, with a few rocky crags."³³ Still, Pwyll and his barons were not there to admire scenery. The significance of this aspect of rural

²⁷ Pwyll Pendueic Dyuet, ed. Thomson (see note 6), 34.

²⁸ Pennar Davies, *Rhwng Chwedl a Chredo* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1966), 38.

²⁹ Tim Clarkson, *The Men of the North* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 169–93.

³⁰ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Charlotte Guest (London: Dent, 1906), 26.

³¹ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (see note 7), II, 199.

³² J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (see note 14), 263.

³³ Vyvyan Rees, *Shell Guide to South-West Wales* (see note 8), 40.

space is political. The hills were in the midst of Pwyll's domains; being uninhabited, they were neutral territory for both the prince and his lords. They are evidence for the author's political awareness, not least of Pwyll's comparative weakness.³⁴ When, in the second branch, Bendigeidfran takes counsel, his advisers come to him at his court. He is not summoned to a remote spot for gratuitous advice from vassals. The Preseli Hills therefore bring out the relative insecurity of royal power in Dyfed, in contrast to its unquestioned authority in Gwynedd. Rural space has a political aspect throughout the *Four Branches*.

Both politics and a wonder-tale figure in the episode of Teyrnon Twryf Liant, lord of Gwent Is-Coed (in south-east Wales). Rhiannon has a baby, but the new-born child is stolen in the night, and his mother has to do penance for his supposed murder. That same night, on the other side of the country, Teyrnon fights off a monster that has been stealing foals from his stable; when it has gone, he finds a baby boy in the straw. He adopts the child, who four years later is recognized as the son of Pwyll and Rhiannon. He is restored to his father and mother, Rhiannon is freed from her punishment, and so all ends happily.

Like Gwawl, Teyrnon Twryf Liant has a geographical name. Its second part means "thunder of waters" and is referred to eagres or tidal bores on the Severn and other rivers of south-east Wales. His first name is more problematic, and here I wish to correct a detail in an earlier publication. I argued that *Teyrnon* had nothing to do with an otherwise unknown Celtic god *Tigernonos* "great lord," but was due to a misunderstanding of the name of Nant Teyrnon "valley of lords," a feudal center in lower Gwent, the author of the texts having taken Nant Teyrnon instead as meaning "Teyrnon's valley".

Because Teyrnon, like Gwawl, is unknown elsewhere in Welsh tradition, I regarded him as an authorial invention.³⁵ But the last point cannot be so. Teyrnon is one of the characters in the *Four Branches* who are mentioned in earlier texts, such as the eleventh-century saga of Culhwch and Olwen, where he appears in slightly corrupted form as "Teyrnon Twr Bliant". He also figures in obscure archaic verse from the Book of Taliesin, and perhaps in a praise-poem of about 1100 in the Black Book of Carmarthen.³⁶ He cannot have been invented by the author of the *Four Branches* in the early twelfth century, who would instead know of him from Celtic tradition.

³⁴ Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the "Four Branches of the Mabinogi"* (see note 24), 44, 68.

³⁵ Andrew Breeze, "The Name of Teyrnon Twrf Liant," *Perspectives on Celtic Languages*, ed. Maria Bloch-Trojnar. Lublin Studies in Celtic Languages, 6 (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009), 111–18.

³⁶ *Culhwch and Olwen*, ed. Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), 90; *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. Marged Haycock (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2009), 299.

The upshot here is that the author knew of Teyrnnon as a legendary magnate of south-east Wales, and incorporated him into the text as a vassal of Pwyll in the south-west. On Teyrnnon's origins we may say this. There is nothing whatever to suggest that he was a god or that his name is from reconstructed *Tigernonos* "great lord," although some keep saying this. Nor does anything show him as historical. He is unknown in Welsh genealogies. It may thus be that he derives from misunderstanding of the name of Nant Teyrnnon "valley of lords" (now Llantarnam), an early seat of government in the Gwent region, it being regarded later on as "Teyrnnon's valley." If so, there would be a parallel in the bard-magician Myrddin or Merlin, accepted by all as from misinterpretation of *Caerfyrddin* or Carmarthen "fortress of the sea-stronghold" as "Myrddin's fortress."³⁷ That would explain why we hear so little of Teyrnnon in Welsh sources (he is, for example, unknown in the triads). It is curious to think of this gallant lord of Lower Gwent as existing thanks to toponymic error; but this explanation appears to fit the facts. Once again, we may see the creative imagination of the author of the four stories, making character and incident from minimal sources.

III. The Second Branch, The Tale of Branwen

The following narrative moves from South Wales to Gwynedd and Ireland. It tells how the King of Ireland came to Gwynedd to seek the hand of Branwen, sister of Bendigeidfran, King of Britain or "the Isle of the Mighty." They marry and have a child, but a murmuring amongst the nobles of Ireland obliges her husband to put her away and force her to work as a menial in the royal kitchens. Yet she is astute. She sends a message to her brother; he invades Ireland; the Irish sue for peace, terms are agreed; but all ends in disaster, with Ireland ravaged and a mere handful of Britons escaping back to Gwynedd, where Branwen dies and is buried, and the survivors find that Britain has fallen into the hands of a usurper. This is the bleakest and most tragic of the four stories.

As regard place and particularly rural space, we may say this. The action begins in the imposing setting of Harlech, now crowned by Edward I's castle, on a high rock with magnificent views of Snowdonia and the Irish Sea. (The rock discouraged attackers; the view aided reconnaissance; the sea let the Royal Navy supply the garrison. Edward I's planning was strategic and severely practical.) Once again, the choice of Harlech as setting for a mini-epic tells us something of the author. Harlech, despite present-day fame in song and tourist-poster, plays an

³⁷ Anon., "Merlin," *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales*, ed. John Davies, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines, and Peredur Lynch (see note 10), 549–50.

insignificant part in early tradition. The nineteenth century supplied interesting information on its history after Longshanks, and some carefully hedged suppositions on what came before him, the one certain fact being “the discovery of some Roman coins and a golden torques in the vicinity.” Harlech (in Llandanwg) was not even a parish in its own right.³⁸ Sir John Lloyd called it a “famous site” on the basis of the tale of Branwen, mentioning it with Mur y Castell a few miles inland (which appears in the fourth branch, where a sodden moorland retreat is made out as a love-nest).³⁹ Nevertheless, accounts of castle and borough imply that Harlech was no place until Edward I’s men made it a center of English administration in North Wales.⁴⁰ A glossary of bardic language shows nothing on it that predates the story of Branwen.⁴¹

We know that soon after 1300 there was no building fit for government purposes at Harlech, because Edward I had Llywelyn’s hall at Ystumgwern dismantled and brought five miles north to be rebuilt there (the hall was a modest structure, measuring fifteen feet by forty-two).⁴² Gruffydd tried to show that, because the rock is called *carreg* “rock” in the text and not *llech* “rock,” the author did not know Harlech well, for its natives now use the second word for the eminence on which they live, but never the first.⁴³ If the author (who has excellent knowledge of other Gwynedd places) actually came from Harlech, it would be surprising. But there is no reason to suppose that. The evidence suggests that Harlech was deserted in the twelfth century, despite its position on a main north-south coastal road. An official guide thus declares, “Neither history nor archaeology furnish any evidence to suggest that Harlech itself had formerly had a castle of the princes.” It also makes retrograde remarks on the tale of Branwen, describing this literary masterpiece as “folk-tale” and “myth”, and no rival for the “light of recorded fact” coming with English invasion.⁴⁴

More helpful is Count Tolstoy, quoting Brynley Roberts on how the Gwynedd place-names “have a greater ring of confidence than the Dyfed locations”, the implication being that the author came from Gwynedd.⁴⁵ It is true that Gwynedd is known in more detail than Dyfed, just as Bendigeidfran is a more decisive and formidable ruler of Gwynedd than Pwyll or Pryderi are of Dyfed; one notes also

³⁸ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (see note 7), I, 393.

³⁹ Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (see note 14), 238.

⁴⁰ E. A. Lewis, *The Mediaeval Boroughs of Snowdonia* (London: Henry Sotheman, 1912), 31.

⁴¹ John Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1931–1963), 766.

⁴² Aileen Fox, “Early Christian Period: Settlement Sites and Other Remains,” *A Hundred Years of Welsh Archaeology*, ed. V. E. Nash-Williams (Gloucester: Cambrian Archaeological Association, 1946), 105–22.

⁴³ Gruffydd, *Rhiannon* (see note 16), 8.

⁴⁴ A. J. Taylor, *Harlech Castle* (Cardiff: HMSO, 1980), 4.

⁴⁵ Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature* (see note 2), 490.

how, in the fourth branch, the battle-hosts of Gwynedd defeat those of Dyfed (who are yet treated with singular and curious consideration). But Roberts did not reflect that, if we could be sure where Arberth and other Dyfed places are, his arguments fall to the ground.

The author knew Glyn Cuch as good for hunting, the mound of Arberth as an enchanted spot, and Preseli as a political meeting-place. Roberts's reference to any of these as a "liminal area" with "no real sense of geography" does not hold water. It is the very point of the present exercise to show that the author of the *Four Branches* knew these locations at first-hand. They did and do exist. Finally, Professor Sims-Williams remarks that "some sort of role for Harlech as a native royal centre is suggested by the tale of *Branwen*." His statement is vague and confused.⁴⁶ If Harlech had been a seat of native government, we should have testimony for it from Welsh tradition and history. The implication is, instead, that placing Bendigeidfran's court at Harlech was an imaginative creation of the author, who needed no tradition to do that. Patrick Sims-Williams also here remarks that the date of the story is "uncertain," where he very strangely seems unaware of arguments for the 1120s or early 1130s in my *Medieval Welsh Literature*, despite a review of it in a periodical of which he is editor.⁴⁷

Another problem in the tale of Branwen has been the Irish river "Llinon," whether it is the Liffey at Dublin or the river Shannon in the west. It comes in a passage on how the Irish king and court react when a Welsh invader comes to Ireland. The Irish nobles tell their king, Matholwch, that there is no other counsel than to retreat over the river Llinon, to keep the river between him and the British troops, and break down the bridge across the river, for there was a lodestone at the bottom of the river that neither ship nor vessel could pass over. When the British king Bendigeidfran came to the land, the fleet with him by the bank of the river, his chieftains explain the difficulty. He resolves the problem by declaring that he who will be chief, should be a bridge. Bendigeidfran (a giant) lies down across the river, hurdles are placed upon him, and the host passes over thereby.⁴⁸

What was this Irish river? Sir Ifor Williams was firmly for the "Shannon." He cited Hogan for its Latin form as "Sinonam," and described Welsh "ll" as a sound substitute for Irish "sh," so that it would be an oral, not written, borrowing. Beside that, "Llinon" means "spear" in Welsh, a fit name for a river, as with the Gelau of Abergele in North Wales, or the Cleddau at Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire. Of the author's curious reference to "the fleet with him by the bank of the river," he

⁴⁶ Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (see note 2), 298.

⁴⁷ D. R. Johnston, '[Review of] *Medieval Welsh Literature*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 34 (1997), 122–23.

⁴⁸ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Charlotte Guest (see note 30), 41–42.

said it shows the author knew nothing of Irish geography. But on the subject of hurdles he was silent.⁴⁹

Following Sir Ifor, Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones in 1949 without hesitation took the rivers as “Shannon.”⁵⁰ The first reference to Dublin came with W. J. Gruffydd. He pointed out that the bundles of wattle cast upon Bendigeidfran’s back, so that his army could pass to the other side, allude to the Irish name of Dublin, *Baile Átha Cliath*, “town of a ford of hurdles,” though he spoiled the observation by stating that Bendigeidfran lay down, not over an Irish river, but between Britain and Ireland (which is nonsense), and that this part of the tale of Branwen must originally have been in Irish (which is absurd).⁵¹

The late Proinsias Mac Cana then took on the question. He tried to have it both ways, like other confused scholars. He followed *both* Ifor Williams in seeing the Llinon as the Shannon, with Welsh sound-substitution of the initial sound, *and* Gruffydd in seeing the hurdles as an allusion to Dublin. He solved the question of the fleet and the river by positing a lacuna, and so read “Bendigeidfran came to the land and the fleet with him, and he advanced towards the bank of the river.”⁵² That is special pleading. The ships would in any case be left behind on the south side of Dublin Bay, and not at Howth or anywhere on the north side, since Dublin’s stronghold is on the Liffey’s south bank, on a bank of boulder clay left by an ancient glacier, and now with Dublin Castle topping it. Mac Cana did not see that an allusion to Dublin collides with identification of the Llinon as Shannon. But Rachel Bromwich did, speaking up for the Llinon as not the Shannon, but the Liffey.⁵³ She was noted briefly by Derick Thomson, who thought the river was the Shannon just the same, logic notwithstanding.⁵⁴

How has this explanation fared? Jeffrey Gantz likewise tried to have it both ways. He said that, since the Liffey flows into the Irish Sea, it is not a suitable line of defense against an invader with a fleet, and that *Llinon* might represent “Shannon.” On the other hand, the hurdles clearly allude to Dublin’s Irish name.⁵⁵ These doubts had no effect on Mac Cana, who in 1977 still styled the Llinon as “Shannon” *tout court*.⁵⁶ Yet Patrick Sims-Williams, citing discussion by Saunders Lewis and Thomas Charles-Edwards, in 1991 observed that it was far more likely

⁴⁹ *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, ed. Ifor Williams (see note 15), 195–96.

⁵⁰ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (see note 6), 34.

⁵¹ W. J. Gruffydd, *Rhiannon* (see note 16), 8.

⁵² Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1958), 119–21.

⁵³ *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, ed. Rachel Bromwich (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), 284 n. 1.

⁵⁴ *Branwen Uerch Lyr*, ed. D. S. Thomson (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961), 33.

⁵⁵ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Jeffrey Gantz (London: Penguin, 1976), 76.

⁵⁶ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Writers of Wales: The Mabinogion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1977), 26.

that the river was the Liffey than the Shannon, with scribal miscopying of *Lliuon* as *Llinon*.⁵⁷ I accepted this without hesitation in 1997.⁵⁸ It was similarly accepted in Sioned Davies's Oxford translation, which does not so much as mention the Shannon.⁵⁹ In my *Origins* of 2009 I added one significant point, noting that from the year 1000 there was a bridge over the Liffey in Dublin, at the end of the modern Bridge Street, on the site of Father Mathew Bridge, and immediately downstream from the ford of hurdles where the Liffey was previously crossed on foot. The bridge must have been one of the sights of Old Dublin. When the author of the *Four Branches* mentions a bridge over the "Llinon," we can say that it really existed, and was over a century old by the time the tales were written.⁶⁰ There were bridges built over the Shannon in the 1120s by Turlough O Connor, including one at Athlone. But they were not as old as the one over the Liffey at Dublin, and not as famous.

Scholars of the *Four Branches*, though disagreeing on other questions constantly, yet seem agreed that the Llinon is the Liffey, not the Shannon. Or so it would appear; for the Shannon now finds a defender in Count Tolstoy. He follows Mac Cana with the argument that, if the Welsh had a fleet, they could cross Dublin Bay easily. The Liffey and lodestones could not stop them. If, however, they were stranded by the Shannon somewhere near Athlone, their ships way behind them on the Irish Sea would be useless. After reviewing references in early sources to the Shannon, he concludes that "all the geographical implications in *Branwen* indicate the Shannon as the river intended by the *Llinon*." How, then, to account for the allusion to hurdles?

Mac Cana's "perversity of the story-teller's nature" is not good enough. Count Tolstoy sees rather "some extraneous factor that induced" the storyteller to mention Dublin here in the story. He believes that "in an earlier version of the tale it was not the Irish Sea that was navigated by Bran, but those dark waters which divided Britain from the Otherworld realms of Annwfn or Caer Sidi", like ancient Styx or Lethe, the author of *Branwen* thus having added "two watery barriers (the Liffey and the Shannon) to the Irish Sea," in place of one flood in the original text.⁶¹

This has not been well received. Sims-Williams, who mentions it, yet observes that *ll* for initial *s* in loanwords is not to be expected. No other instance of it is on record, and Parry-Williams's *English Element in Welsh* gives no support for the view.⁶² So the phonological argument for Llinon=Shannon simply falls to the

⁵⁷ Patrick Sims-Williams, "The Submission of Irish Kings in Fact and Fiction," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 22 (1991), 31–61.

⁵⁸ Andrew Breeze, *Medieval Welsh Literature* (see note 21), 78.

⁵⁹ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Sioned Davies (see note 22), 29.

⁶⁰ Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the "Four Branches of the Mabinogi"* (see note 24), 19, 62.

⁶¹ Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature* (see note 25), 144–46, 150, 153, 158.

⁶² Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (see note 26), 197–201.

ground. To that may be added four other arguments. First, the shortest route from North Wales to Ireland brings one to Dublin. When Matholwch leaves Wales with his bride, he sails from Caernarfon. The implication is that he is going toward Dublin, and not toward (say) Ulster, Wexford, or Waterford. Second, it is easy to attack Dublin from the sea, because the southern shore of Dublin Bay near Sandymount and Blackrock is flat and open. The proof of this is the Martello towers along its length, built by the British government during the Napoleonic Wars (one of those towers figures memorably in James Joyce's *Ulysses*). If a French fleet might enter Dublin Bay two centuries ago, a Welsh one might do the same seven centuries previously. Third, it is, however, difficult even now to get from Dublin to the Shannon. It is 78 miles from Dublin to Athlone. That would take three or four days for a medieval army, even if they were not attacked from the rear as they made their way along An tSlige Mhór, the great highway west. And yet there is not the slightest mention of this trek across Ireland in our text.

This is the more surprising since T. J. Morgan in his *Ysgrifau Llenyddol* long ago commented on our author's distaste for omission, and was here taken up by A. O. H. Jarman.⁶³ The author had a Homeric wish to account for every detail. This applies especially to journeys, when we are told that however long the British survivors of the Irish war were upon the road, they came to London, and there buried the head of Bendigeidfran: or, on Pryderi and Manawydan in the third branch, returning from England, that however long they were upon the road, they came to Dyfed.⁶⁴ If Bendigeidfran and his men had to tramp across the Irish Midlands, it is extraordinary that we hear nothing of it.

One might add that, after the final battle with the Irish, we hear nothing of any return journey across Ireland by the handful of survivors, who eventually reach Anglesey, where Branwen dies and is buried. Finally, if the war with the Irish meant a dangerous and involved march into the interior, one might expect the author to know more of Irish geography. But not so. Like other visitors, the author shows no knowledge of Irish topography beyond that of the Dublin area, except in one matter, the allusion to Ireland's five provinces. This contrasts sharply with other Welsh texts, including *Culhwch and Olwen*, the life of Gruffudd ap Cynan, and writings by Gerald of Wales, as also the author's minute knowledge of Welsh topography.

So there is one conclusion. The Llinon is the Liffey; the hurdles are those of Dublin; the bridge broken down stood at the foot of Bridge Street. The next time one passes Father Mathew Bridge in central Dublin, one may like to think that it was

⁶³ A. O. H. Jarman, "Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi," *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol*, ed. Geraint Bowen (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1974), 83–142.

⁶⁴ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Charlotte Guest (see note 30), 55.

there, on that very spot, that the British royal giant Bendigeidfran supposedly lay down across the river, and let his army cross northwards over his back. If so, Dublin, which has seen the creation of much great literature, also had a part in creating the tale of Branwen. On this question Sir Ifor Williams and Proinsias Mac Cana were wrong, and Rachel Bromwich and Patrick Sims-Williams are right.

IV. The Third Branch, the Tale of Manawydan

After Armageddon in the second branch, the third sets out how the survivors come to terms with the usurper Caswallon by going to Oxford and becoming his vassal. They then settle in Dyfed, which is described in lyrical terms. They wander through the country, thinking they had never seen a land more delightful to live in, nor a better hunting ground, nor a land more abundant than that in honey and fish; and it is there that they live upon the meat which they hunt and on fish and wild swarms. But the idyll does not last. Magic power brings desolation to Dyfed, and Manawydan and Pryderi go to Hereford and other unnamed towns in England to practice trades (successively making saddles, shields, and shoes), which they do excellently, but unfortunately exciting the hostility of English competitors. So they go back to Dyfed. Manawydan brings wheat with him, and rejoices to see again Arberth and its old hunting-grounds. He begins once more to catch fish and the wild animals in the coverts there, but also to plant the wheat springing up the best in the world, and his three crofts thriving in like growth, "so that mortal had not seen wheat finer than that."⁶⁵ Yet the wheat is ravaged by mice; Manawydan captures one mouse and prepares to hang it on the mound of Arberth, despite the attempts of a passing clerk and a priest to stop him. Finally a bishop on the road buys him off; and the bishop turns out to be no cleric but the agent of magic powers. After hard bargaining, Dyfed is released from its curse and all ends well.

Despite problems with sorcerers, Dyfed is seen as smiling and welcoming country. The author had positive identification with it, as with Gwynedd, but not with Scotland, Ireland, or England, all seen more or less negatively in terms of treachery and insecurity, whether personal (Gwawl son of Clud) or political (Matholwch, Caswallon, Hereford craftsmen). Dyfed, in contrast, is home: a land with fish in its rivers, game in its woodlands, bees in its glades, and wheat in its fields. Remarkably, livestock never appears. The author had an upper-class interest in hunting and fishing, and a practical one in raising crops, but no apparent interest in dairying or in meat other than game. Dyfed's rural beauties are seen in the way

⁶⁵ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Charlotte Guest (see note 30), 55.

an estate-owner might see it, as producing things that are good to eat. It is beautiful, but beautiful because it is fertile.

V. The Fourth Branch, the Tale of Math

After a bitter-sweet sojourn in Dyfed, we return to Gwynedd, and Gwynedd's tragic conflict with Dyfed. Our final tale opens by telling us that Math son of Mathonwy was lord over Gwynedd, and Pryderi son of Pwyll was lord over one-and-twenty cantrefs in the South. Those were the seven cantrefs of Dyfed, and the seven of Morgannwg [=Glamorgan], and the four of Ceredigion, and the three of Ystrad Tywi. Such is the political setting. At the court of Gwynedd is an intrigue between Goewin, a maiden in the service of Math, and his nephew Gilfaethwy, who desires her. The first part of the story relates how Gilfaethwy's brother Gwydion (a warlock) provokes war with Dyfed by stealing Pryderi's magic swine; while Math is on campaign, Gilfaethwy uses the opportunity to rape Goewin. But he and his brother pay for their crime on Math's return (they are for a while transformed into wild animals).

The second part of the tale deals with the Gwynedd nobleman Lleu and his wife Blodeuedd, magically created for him out of flowers. She yet proves faithless, and her lover Gronw tries to murder her husband; Lleu escapes by turning into an eagle. The tale ends with Math's punishment of Gronw (speared through his backbone, so that he dies) and Blodeuedd (turned into an owl). Order is restored, and, after the betrayals of war and love, Gwynedd returns to peaceful and prosperous rule. In this catalogue of goings-on in high places, three locations concern us: Rhuddlan Teifi, the court of Pryderi in Ceredigion; Eifionydd and Ardudwy, the domain of Lleu; and Mur y Castell, Lleu's court in Ardudwy's uplands. They are described thus.

It was to Rhuddlan Teifi that Gwydion went, and Gilfaethwy, and ten men with them, as far as Ceredigion, to the place which was later called Rhuddlan Teifi. There was a court of Pryderi's there, and in the guise of bards they came inside. After entertaining their host with tales and the like, they show thanks for his hospitality by stealing his magic swine. They are early Welsh pig-rustlers. Pryderi and his men set off after them, and the result is war between Dyfed and Gwynedd, which Dyfed loses. Of Rhuddlan Teifi we can say this. It is in the parish of Llanwenog, seven miles west-south-west of the pocket university town of Lampeter.

Two centuries ago a topographer said, "High Mead, another seat, is delightfully situated on an eminence above the river Teivy, commanding an extensive prospect of the surrounding country on both sides of the vale, which here expands into

considerable breadth; the house is completely sheltered from the north winds by a range of lofty hills," and the like.⁶⁶ So the spot was well-chosen. The Lord Rhys (d. 1197) eventually granted Rhuddlan Teifi as a manor to the Cistercian monastery of Whitland, Carmarthenshire. Gruffydd maintained that "this episode was probably re-written by an author who knew next to nothing about Wales outside the two districts where the two parts of *Math* are staged, Arvon and Ardudwy. The only name in Dyfed which is mentioned is Rhuddlan Teifi."⁶⁷

Against that one can say (a) there is not a shred of evidence to suggest another author here, and (b) Rhuddlan Teifi is not in Dyfed but in Ceredigion. Sir John Lloyd spoke of the place's "rich meadows along the river bank and sunny, southward-facing slopes," with Pryderi's "court at Rhuddlan Teifi, where the house of Highmead has been built," where Gwydion tricked Pryderi into parting with his "marvellous herd of swine."⁶⁸ Whitland's right to Rhuddlan was confirmed by King John (1199–1216). The estate, fertile in wheat and with vast numbers of cattle and sheep, was originally granted to the nearby Premonstratensian abbey of Talley by the Lord Rhys (d. 1197), but the Whitland monks had got hold of it by underhand means, and kept it until Henry VIII's days.⁶⁹ It is evident that the author of the narrative knew Rhuddlan Teifi as a desirable property, where Pryderi's house would have been at Pentre Rhuddlan, immediately by the great house of Highmead.⁷⁰ Since we argue that the author's son was the Lord Rhys who at first granted the estate to Talley Abbey, which he had founded at an unknown date in the 1180s, this would be no surprise. It had been a possession of the princes of Dyfed, and the author knew it well.

In contrast to sunny slopes, lush meadows, and contented cattle at Rhuddlan Teifi is Eifionydd and Ardudwy, granted to the young lord Lleu, whose adventures and misfortunes make up the final part of the story of *Math*. He and his bride Blodeuedd sleep together after the marriage feast, Gwydion declares that a man without territory can hardly maintain himself, and *Math* promises him the very best cantref for a young man to have, that of Dinoding, which, as the author adds, is nowadays called Eifionydd and Ardudwy. Lleu set up court in a place called *Mur y Castell*, in the uplands of Ardudwy.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (see note 7), II, 159.

⁶⁷ W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1928), 330.

⁶⁸ J. E. Lloyd, *The Story of Ceredigion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1937), 19.

⁶⁹ J. F. O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1140–1540* (New York: Declan X. McMullen Company, 1947), 8–9.

⁷⁰ F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1977), 74.

⁷¹ *The Mabinogion*, trans. Charlotte Guest (see note 30), 74.

Sir John Lloyd defined the *cantref* or district of Dinoding as the “rugged heights which surround the north-eastern corner of Cardigan Bay,” cited in the above passage, and remarked that “as a rough and craggy region, it tried and disciplined the powers of the budding chieftain.” He went on to mention Lleu’s court “amid the broken walls of the dismantled Roman encampment. It was a land which bred hardy wielders of the lance, a nurturer of warriors rather than churchmen, for neither here nor in Eifionydd were there in early times any churches of the first rank.”⁷² As for the Roman camp’s “broken walls”, these are now called Tomen y Mur, “mound of the wall” and are on uplands in the parish of Maentwrog, looking down on the decommissioned Trawsfynydd nuclear power-station. A modern topographer describes it as a deserted “green mound on a rushy plateau,” where acid soil and heavy rainfall foster a moorland flora, and fields are fenced with slate. He mentions the Roman camp, occupied from 78 to 140 C.E.; a Norman motte, from the time of William Rufus; and a later farmstead, now abandoned and collapsed.⁷³ Nevertheless, this melancholy spot had the advantage of being at a Roman road-junction, so that it was seen by travellers. Located on the 950-foot contour and with views for miles, it was a dramatic location for the Welsh storyteller to locate there the amours of Blodeuedd and Gronw.

VI. Conclusion

Several points arise from the above. First is the author’s knowledge of Dyfed, Ceredigion, Gwynedd, and Dublin. With the first two are the woods of the Cuch, the prehistoric mound by Arberth, and the estate of Rhuddlan Teifi. The author also knew Dublin and imaginatively incorporated Dublin’s oldest bridge into the narrative. In artistic contrast are Harlech, on its crag above the sea, and Mur y Castell in rugged country a few miles to the east, above the vale of Trawsfynydd. Readers have the experience, not often to be had with a medieval romance, of pointing to places that were known by an author nine centuries ago, who used them in the most natural and down-to-earth way as the scenes for wonder, love, and the supernatural. So the author had an intimate knowledge of north-west and south-west Wales, a lesser one of other Welsh regions, and a sketchier one of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The last three are seen in negative terms, the first as a place of usurpers and inferior hostile craftsmen, the second as home to an absurd (but treacherous) suitor; the third as a land of cruel and fickle husbands and nobles.

⁷² Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (see note 14), 238–39.

⁷³ Vyvyan Rees, *A Shell Guide: Mid Western Wales* (London: Faber, 1971), 128.

Further, territory is consistently seen in terms of royal power and administration. Lands are described as seen by hunters, administrators, and rulers. The conviction and circumstantial detail with which this is done is remarkable. It strongly indicates that the author was at home in circles of power. The author had the gift of selecting a wood, a moor, an Irish bridge, a seaside crag, a ruined stronghold, and of populating these artistically contrasted locales, rather as Thomas Hardy did in the nineteenth century with the Wessex of his novels, although the Welsh author is interested in kings, lords, and ladies, while Hardy has an eye for common folk. These places constantly relate to the activities of a ruling class, whether hunting, diplomacy, marriage-brokering, adultery, and the like. The Welsh writer praises the beauty and fertility of Dyfed in a way unusual for one born in Gwynedd, but has little interest in the beauties of nature as such. In short, continued attention to description of place will, it seems, tend to confirm my hypothesis (set out in books cited above) that the tales are the work of a twelfth-century Gwynedd princess resident in Dyfed.

Chapter 7

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Rural Space and Transgressive Space in *Bérenger au lonc cul*

The Old French fabliau *Bérenger au lonc cul*¹ dates from the first half of the thirteenth century; it is preserved in three manuscripts, A, B, and D,² and was composed by a *fableur* Guerin, who names himself in the third of these mss.³ Of the three extant manuscript witnesses, B and D offer a version of the story, (which I

¹ The name of the eponymous hero of this text is rendered variously in modern editions: Bérenger/Bérengier au lonc/long cul. I use the form Bérenger au lonc cul, unless citing other sources which use a different spelling. There are several editions of the *fabliau*: it appears in the early collection *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud. 6 volumes (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1872–1890), III, 252–62 and IV, 57–66; in the study *Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux. Variantes, remaniements, dégradations*, ed. by Jean Rychner. Université de Neuchâtel, Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté de Lettres, fascicule 28, 2 volumes (Neuchâtel and Geneva: Droz, 1960), Volume II *Textes*, 100–109; in *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, ed. by Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard, 10 volumes (Assen and Maastricht: van Gorcum, 1983–2001), IV, 245–77. All references, unless otherwise stated, are to this third edition, 270–77; the full text of Noomen and Boogaard is given at the end of this chapter, together with my own modern English translation. See also other published translations of *Berengier*: Robert Harrison Berkeley, *Galic Salt: Eighteen Fabliaux Translated from the Old French* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1974); *Fabliaux érotiques*, ed. and trans. Luciano Rossi and Richard Straub. Lettres gothiques (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1992); and *Chevalerie et grivoiserie: Fabliaux de chevalerie*, ed. and trans. Jean-Luc Leclanche. Série Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 2003).

² Manuscript A: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 837

Manuscript B: Berne, Bibliothèque de la Bourgoisie, 354

Manuscript D: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 19152.

³ In their introduction to this *fabliau*, Noomen and Boogaard point out that there are five other *fabliaux* in which there is an attribution to a *fableur* by the name of Guerin, or its variant form Garin: *Du Prestre qui abevet*, *Du Chevalier qui fist parler les cons*, *La Grue*, *Des Tresces*, and *Du Prestre qui manja mores*. Given, however, that Garin/Guerin is a very common name in Old French, it is unwise to conclude that these *fabliaux* are all the work of one individual. See “Berengier au Long Cul,” *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, ed. by Noomen and Boogaard IV (see note 1), 245–77; here 248.

will follow Noomen and Boogaard in calling version I) in which the issue of class distinction appears to be of particular importance to the poet; manuscript A contains an alternative (version II in Noomen and Boogaard's analysis) in which the subject of class is given much less importance, and which has been deemed by most critics to be an inferior reworking of version I.⁴ Rychner, for example, in the first volume of his study of the *fabliaux*, is particularly categorical in his assertion of the primacy of version I: "bref, un fabliau analogue à D se trouverait à la base du remaniement A, qui l'aurait gravement altéré" (In short, a *fabliau* similar to D was apparently reworked and significantly altered by A).⁵ Roy Percy attenuates Rychner's dismissal of the A version, but even he still concludes that "Rychner was perfectly correct in recognizing the superiority of D."⁶ The following discussion will take version I as its starting point in an analysis of the portrayal and function of rural space of *Bérenger au lonc cul*; this is, however, principally for convenience, in recognition of the fact that it is the more generally known version, and is not a tacit acceptance of its superior worth. The discussion will return in the second part of the chapter to version II, in order to review and challenge the "inferior reworking" status of this version, in the light of conclusions drawn about the function of rural space in the *fabliau*.

Both versions of *Bérenger au lonc cul* exemplify common *topoi* of the *fabliau* genre: thus we see a familiar battle of wits in which the wife uses her superior intelligence to defeat and cuckold her foolish husband, and the whole story centres on a ribald anatomical joke that features explicit references to female genitalia and to the anus.⁷ These generic *topoi* typically function around binary oppositions which lend the *fabliaux* the narrative economy necessary for their short form: in the case of *Bérenger* we have husband versus wife, husband versus lover, *le con* versus *le cul*. The presentation of these opposites in the *fabliaux* also often involves the subversion of normal social expectations which creates a *monde à l'envers*, a topsy-

⁴ All the editions referred to above (see note 1) base their editions on version I as the preferred version, although opinion is divided as to whether ms B or D is the better choice for a base ms.; Rychner chose D for his edition, whereas Noomen and Boogaard prefer B. There is one published edition of version II, by Nora Scott, *Contes pour rire? Fabliaux des XIIe et XIVe siècles* 10/18 (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1977), 205–09. A text of version II, based upon Noomen and Boogaard's diplomatic transcription of manuscript A, accompanied by my own modern English translation appears at the end of this chapter, 31–41.

⁵ Jean Rychner, *Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux*, Volume I *Observations* (see note 1), 67.

⁶ Roy Percy, "Relations between the D and A Versions of *Bérenger au long cul*," *Romance Notes* 14 (1972): 173–78; here 177.

⁷ The common features of *fabliau* humor and narratives are described in Charles Muscatine, *The Old French Fabliaux* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception*. Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages, 24 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1987), Dominique Boutet, *Les Fabliaux*. Etudes littéraires (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), Brian J. Levy, *The Comic Text: Patterns and Images in the Old French Fabliaux*. Faux titre: études de langue et littérature françaises, 186 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000).

turvy version of reality that generates comedy through incongruity.⁸ So here we find a stupid husband and shrewd wife; a husband “in the wrong” and a triumphant lover “in the right”; these culminate in the victory of female over male, obscenely encoded in the battle between the *cul* and the *con*.

Version I, however, adds a further binary opposition, that of the upper, knightly class versus the lower *vilain* or peasant class.⁹ Moreover, unlike the other oppositions which are subject to comic inversion, in this version the question of class remains firmly orthodox; version I of *Bérenger au long cul* is, initially at least, unequivocal in asserting the primacy of the aristocracy over the parvenu *fils à vilain*—see the poet-narrator’s comments about the dire consequences of mixed marriages in vv. 24–35, for example. Turning now to the presence and portrayal of rural spaces in this *fabliau*, we might, in the light of the clear contrast between aristocrat and *vilain*, wish to add to our earlier list of oppositions: “courtly space” versus “rural space.” Indeed it is fairly obvious that *Bérenger* moves between these two kinds of space; for example, the locations shift from court, to woodland, back to court, back to woodland and end at the court, producing a circular topography that underpins the narrative structure of the *fabliau*. This topography makes it clear that there is at least some tension between rural and courtly spaces, and that this corresponds to the two principal characters: the husband, for example, is clearly a product of the land (vv. 18–19, 52–53), and resorts to a rural space to carry out his deception of his wife; while she in her turn parades her ultimate victory back in the courtly setting, having defeated him in his own rural space.

But closer examination of the rural space in version I of *Bérenger* suggests that it operates in a rather more complex and sophisticated manner than simply mirroring the apparent emphasis on class ethos, and that it is, in fact, crucial to a reading of this version and, as a consequence, to that of version II. First of all, the rural location features not just once, but twice: there is a double move from courtly to rural space and back again. This repetition draws the audience’s attention to the function of this space in the economy of the tale as a whole. Secondly, the activities which take place there also claim our attention: the clashing of sword upon shield in the first rural scene makes both literal and narrative noise, and the obscene act of the noble wife in the second contrasts starkly with her courtly standing which is emphasized in the courtly scenes. Moreover, these activities also represent the

⁸ For discussions of the role of incongruity in medieval humor, see the work of Leslie Zarker Morgan, especially “Can an Epic Woman Be Funny? Humor and the Female Protagonist in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Epic,” *International Journal of Humor Research* 19, (2006): 157–78; also Anne E. Cobby, *Ambivalent Conventions: Formula and Parody in Old French*. Faux titre: études de langue et littérature françaises, 101 (Amsterdam and Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995).

⁹ For discussion of the way in which Old French literary texts have played with the *vilain-courtois* paradigm, see Kathryn Gravdal, *Vilain and Courtois: Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Regents Studies in Medieval Culture (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

collision and subversion of the other dichotomies in the story—the gendered, social, anatomical—so that, in narrative terms, rural space becomes the crux of the whole work. It is therefore important to look in more detail at how and why this happens and hence at how these two rural spaces work together as the embodiment of the message and the comic impact of this tale. This analysis will also enable us to review the question of whether version I really does present a simple, orthodox portrayal of class, which in turn will allow for a reconsideration of the status of the alternative version II.

The actions of the husband in his first foray into the rural space of the wood are an obvious travesty of knightly behavior, and are what we would expect from a man who prefers haymaking and eating pastries to fighting (vv. 46, 52–53).¹⁰ Comic effect is achieved by the incongruous clothing of a *vilain* in knight's armor and the assault upon shield, sword and lance by their owner; but these incongruities also exemplify the miscegenation to which the poet of this version has so loudly declared his opposition in vv. 24–35. The second scene in this rural setting is then obviously designed to replay the first and re-establish the proper social order: the false bravery of the fake knight needs to be exposed. This is achieved through the intervention of Bérenger au lonc cul who not only defeats this imposter, but remains as the protector of the wife's liaison with her lover, who is a genuine knight.

But the name of this protector introduces a new dynamic into the play with oppositions and the travesty of knightly activity. As Roy Percy has rightly pointed out, "Bérenger au lonc cul" is an obscene rewriting of the name of the famous hero of the *chansons de geste*, Guillaume au cort nez.¹¹ There is thus a generic clash to add to the other clashing sounds to be heard in the two rural encounters: heroic literature collides with the far less courtly world of the *fabliau*, and expectations from two different generic codes are played against each other. This generic play destabilizes the apparently simple class ethos of the tale: as the fake knight assaults the iconic emblems of the chivalric code, so metonymically this *fabliau* appears to assault the heroic literature which glorifies that code.

More importantly, however, the obscene rewriting of the name in the second rural scene also forces us to reappraise our reading of the first. Are there other echoes of more heroic or courtly works or genres to be discerned in this scene, and do these also undercut our initial straightforward reading of the *fabliau*? Both Roy

¹⁰ The husband's food preferences mirror his lack of true chivalry. He does not hunger for the meat which is caught by the huntsman, whose activities were an important practice ground for military action. As Sarah Gordon points out, "fabliau characters are what they eat, morally and socially." *Culinary Comedy in Medieval French Literature*. Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2007), 104.

¹¹ Roy J. Percy, "An Instance of Heroic Parody in the Fabliaux," *Romania* 98 (1977): 105–08.

Pearcy and Keith Busby have suggested that there are; Percy demonstrates that this first rural scene makes allusive reference to the thirteenth-century prose romance *Lestoire de Merlin*, while Keith Busby identifies references to earlier verse romance, specifically to the works of Chrétien de Troyes.¹² In *Lestoire de Merlin* a similar boast to that of the husband is carried out by the character Dagenet, and, to cite one example from Busby, the husband's lazing at home parodies Erec's *recréantise* from Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*. There is, therefore, a subversive pattern of rewriting of epic and romance models, placing them both in the inappropriate context of the *fabliau* and in narrative space which is marked as rural rather than courtly. The rural spaces in *Bérenger* are thus very significant as the *loci* within which this generic clash and consequent undercutting of heroic/courtly narratives take place.

The importance of this rewriting and undercutting is further emphasized by Katherine Brown, who has analyzed rewriting of another courtly form in *Bérenger au lonc cul*.¹³ Brown demonstrates the ways in which the encounter between the man and woman in this *fabliau* reworks the essential elements of the *pastourelle*, a courtly lyric form based upon the meeting of a knight and a shepherdess in a rural setting. She shows how *Bérenger* systematically turns each element of the *pastourelle* upon its head in what might appear to be another case of the undermining of courtly literature. For example, we have the role reversal of the courtly lady "seducing" the low-born man, and there is a comic rewriting, again with a gender reversal, of the typical opening of the *pastourelle*, as the din created by the husband crashing his sword against his shield reworks the song of the shepherdess which typically alerts the knight to her presence.¹⁴ However, Brown concludes that the play with this courtly lyric form reasserts social orthodoxy in *Bérenger au lonc cul* and does not ultimately undermine the values of courtly literature.¹⁵ This is supported by her reading of the moral of the *fabliau* "A mol pastor chie lous laine" (When the shepherd's weak, the wolf shits wool, v. 296). Instead of reading the proverb in the traditional way with the "pastor" as the husband and the wolf as the lover, she suggests, very plausibly, that the "weak

¹² Roy J. Percy, "Relations between the D and A Versions of *Bérenger au lonc cul*," *Romance Notes* 14 (1972): 173–78; Busby, Keith "Courtly Literature and the Fabliaux: Some Instances of Parody," *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 102 (1986): 67–87.

¹³ Katherine Brown, "*Bérenger au lonc cul* and the *pastourelle*," *Romance Notes* 43 (2007): 323–31.

¹⁴ For an edition of the full corpus of *pastourelles*, see Jean-Claude Rivière, *Pastourelles*, 3 volumes. Textes littéraires français, 213, 220, 232 (Geneva: Droz, 1974–1976). For a useful scholarly study of the genre, see Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law*. New Cultural Studies Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

¹⁵ "Although inverted, the text undermines neither courtly literature nor the *pastourelle*, for the essential component of each genre is maintained . . . the only part of the typical *pastourelle* scenario that is not inverted here is the social rank of the characters." Brown, "*Bérenger au lonc cul* and the *pastourelle*" (see note 14), 329.

shepherds" are those, like our heroine's father, who allow the integrity of their bloodlines to be weakened by inappropriate alliances.

However, I am not convinced that the direction or conclusion of *Bérenger* does suggest such a simple return to normative social values as Brown maintains. There are further subversive undercurrents which need to be investigated before we return to this question of the moral of the *fabliau*. The incorporation of the *pastourelle* storyline into the second rural scene adds to the layers of generic play both by playing the conventions of a *pastourelle* against those of the *fabliau*, but also by playing them against heroic expectations generated by a different set of generic conventions. There are thus several layers of subversive effect created within these rural scenes that work collectively to undercut the apparent simplicity of moral outlook set out at the start of the tale. The conflicting generic expectations come to a head as the attempted seduction of the *pastourelle* shepherdess is replayed, alongside the challenge of one knight to another over a matter of chivalric transgression, in the mock "ordeal" of the *baiser honteux*.

This is the comic climax to the *fabliau* and is worth examining in more detail. In order to challenge her worthless husband to this shameful act, the wife bends over and exposes her naked rear. This involves her turning herself upside down, raising her *cul* and *con* to the position where her head should be, and vice versa. It is a corporeal, literal inversion that symbolises the inversions which lie at the heart of this tale; and an act of literal exposure paradoxically designed, by the crude uncovering of the wife's nether parts, to lay bare the true nature of her husband. It also exposes other obscene connotations of the *fabliau*, which contribute to the destabilisation of the distinction between the simple binary oppositions of class and gender.

The exposure of the wife's ass and her husband's bewilderment over the sight of her nether parts has, unsurprisingly, been the subject of some critical attention and debate. E. Jane Burns sees the husband's equating of his wife's genitalia with "the model of a male asshole"¹⁶ as a construction of male power in his arrogant assumption that he "knows" what a woman's body is like. His wife's act, thrusting those parts into his face, both reveals his fundamental ignorance of a woman's body, but also presages her blatant enjoyment of them with her lover, in full sight of her husband, at the end of the tale. Burns thus reads the story as strongly woman-centered and gender-oriented.¹⁷ But, as Simon Gaunt points out, the act cleverly plays off the gender hierarchy against the social hierarchy: the woman may be subject to her husband at home, but in this rural space she can, "as a noble

¹⁶ E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature*. New Cultural Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 40.

¹⁷ An equally strongly gendered reading, although using a different approach based on the theme of dreaming, is found in Alain Corbellari, "Rêves et fabliaux: un autre aspect de la ruse féminine," *Reinardus* 15 (2002): 53–62.

dealing with a peasant,"¹⁸ emerge victorious. The exposure of the woman's ass exposes a fundamental instability in this *fabliau*, as the need to assert male over female in the gender hierarchy comes into conflict with the need to assert noble over peasant in the social hierarchy. As we shall see, it epitomizes the subversive rewriting strategy of the poet Guerin.

The rural setting of the *baiser honteux* also has an important role to play in bringing about the mutual destabilisation of class and gender orthodoxy in this story. The bodily inversion of the *baiser honteux* raises that most disturbing and subversive element of woman, simultaneously celebrated and feared in the *fabliaux*, and places it at the head of her body: her *con*. At no point before this scene has the wife been presented as a sexual being; indeed in accordance with the ethos of courtly literature, this side of her has been concealed beneath the folds of decorum when we have seen her in the courtly setting. However, here, in the rural space in which she confronts her husband, she comes into contact with the earth and the coarse, material sphere of life; and here, the woman reverts to the nature which the medieval misogynists attributed to her, that of an earthly, worldly being, motivated by the desires of the flesh and the body.¹⁹ The inversion of her body exemplifies the dominance of her sexual desire over the rational control of her head and mind. The rural space has not only laid bare the truth of the false knight, it has also laid bare the truth of his wife's nature: this woman is as bound as the rest of her kind by the desires of the flesh. That desire is still visible and dominant at the end of the tale, although it is expressed through a more normative relationship with a male who is her social equal. Hence, although she apparently wins at the end of the tale, she does so only by pretending to be a man, and by reverting to a negative female stereotype.²⁰

Rural space is thus associated on many levels with transgression: we have witnessed the transgression of social and gender norms and of generic expectations. There is, however, yet another aspect of transgressive behavior which is revealed in our rural spaces. As we have seen, the woman's naked rear, that which is uppermost and visible in the *baiser honteux* scene, is the source of the scurrilous name which she adopts. And like that name, it functions both

¹⁸ Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*. Cambridge Studies in French, 53 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 280.

¹⁹ There are many studies of medieval misogyny; for a comprehensive discussion see R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991). *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: an Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. by Alcuin Blamires with Karen Pratt and C.W. Marx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), provides a useful selection of primary texts.

²⁰ Sylvia Huot, in her discussion of madmen and misfits, sums up the impact of the *baiser honteux* scene very neatly: "in her dual aspect as sexual woman and travestied knight, the wife is ultimately a means by which the two men are placed in hierarchical order." Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 47–48.

prospectively, prefiguring the final scene between wife and lover, and retrospectively, adding shades of meaning to the first rural scene. Just as the crude reworking the name of Guillaume au cort nez highlighted more subtle references to heroic literature, so too the crude reference to female and male anatomy and to a shameful sexual act highlights the possibility of reading a sexual act into the knight's behavior in the first rural scene.

The weapons which the *vilain*/knight abuses in his initial forays into the wood are symbols of knighthood and of masculinity: they are what the male *chevalier*, a mounted warrior, uses to fulfill his appointed, male role in society. As such the lance and other military equipment frequently also function as phallic symbols.²¹ Read in this way, the repeated thrusting of his own sword and lance against the shield becomes an autoerotic act on the part of the knight, a substitute for "proper" masculine congress with a woman that replicates the sham of his pretence at chivalry. The failure of the husband to recognize the genital anatomy of his wife when he encounters it in the second woodland scene is thus unsurprising. Moreover it has further connotations: his male-oriented reading of those parts as representing Burns's "male asshole" suggests that autoeroticism may be coupled with homoeroticism in the sexual experience of this unworthy husband. Presented with his wife's genitalia, ready for the taking, the husband fails to act as the dominant male, thrusting his phallus into the ready target she presents, thereby asserting himself over her. He prefers instead to reconstruct her genitalia into a "male asshole" as his preferred target. The gender conflict highlighted by Burns now becomes a question of orientation as much as one of hierarchy.

The failure of the husband to act as a true male and true knight is highlighted by the contrast between this *baiser honteux* scene and the only other example of the same challenge in the *fabliaux* corpus which is found in *La Gageure*.²² In the latter text, a squire is challenged by a chambermaid to submit to the shame of kissing her ass. However, he does not carry out the challenge in the way he is expected to do:

La damoisele se est venue
A l'esquier, que la salue;
Yl leve sus les dras derer,

²¹ The entry under "lance" in Rose M. Bidler, *Dictionnaire érotique: ancien franc,ais, moyen franc,ais, Renaissance*. Erotica vetera (Montréal: CERES, 2002), 384–86, contains a wide range of sexual connotations associated with the lance. Bidler refers in this entry to the general "emploi érotique du vocabulaire militaire" (the use of military vocabulary in an erotic sense) in medieval texts; here 384.

²² The similarities between *La Gageure* and *Bérenger au lonc cul* as examples of parodies of heroic motifs is discussed by Roy J. Percy, "Chansons de geste and Fabliaux: *La Gageure* and *Bérenger au lonc cul*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 79 (1978): 76–83. Per Nykrog in his study of the genre, *Les Fabliaux* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1957), notes that the story of *La Gageure* parodies courtly elements, describing it as "à la fois courtois et grossier" (simultaneously courtly and obscene), 64.

Puis pensout si à bon mester
 Li esquier à soun voler
 De l'affere ne voelt failler.
 Yl sake avaunt un bon bordoun,
 Si l'a donné en my le coun,
 Un gros vit et long et quarre,
 Si l'a en my le coun donné;
 Ensi à ly de ces bras l'afferma
 Ne poeit gwenchir sà ne là. (vv. 71–82)²³

[The chambermaid came to the squire who greeted her. He lifted up her clothing from behind and then he thought hard about doing a good job as he wanted to; he did not want to fail. He drew forth a good staff and gave it to her right in the cunt; a big prick, long and square he gave her, right in the cunt. And he held her firmly with his arms so that she could not move left or right.]

Thus the chambermaid and her mistress, who had set up the challenge as a bet, and a means of shaming the squire, are outwitted by his resoundingly red-blooded response.

The response of the husband in *Bérenger*, by contrast, shows the emasculation of the man at the expense of the woman, the effect which the women in *La Gageure* had aimed, and failed, to accomplish. This is achieved by the conflation of the two anatomical parts in *Bérenger*, the *con* and the *cul*, parts which are typically set in opposition to each other in the *fabliau* corpus.²⁴ A simple reading of *Bérenger* would lead us to expect that its gender opposition, which sees the woman defeat her husband, would be mirrored anatomically in the victory of the *con* over the *cul*. But this is not what happens; unlike the squire in *La Gageure*, the man does not respond in preference to the sight of the *con* and reconstructs it as its oppositional counterpart, the *cul*. So, just as intertextual readings reveal the instability of the class dichotomy in *Bérenger au lonc cul*, so too the battle of the genders proves less clear-cut than it might appear at first sight.

The relationship between the rural and courtly spaces *Bérenger au lonc cul* epitomizes the way in which the poet rewrites a range of conventions from other genres and motifs from other texts; crucially it is in the rural spaces that these conventions collide, giving rise to a subversive instability which is neatly encapsulated in the striking visual representation of the wife's inverted body. This instability is ultimately captured in the moral which ends this *fabliau*—"where the shepherd is weak, the wolf shits wool." Katherine Brown suggests, as we have

²³ "Le Dit de la Gageure," *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, ed. by de Montaiglon and Raynaud (see note 1), II, 193–96.

²⁴ See, for example "Le débat du Con et du Cul," *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles* ed. by de Montaiglon and Raynaud (see note 1), II, 133–36; this short, scurrilous tale features a debate between the two body parts as to which has to endure the more unpleasant suffering, given their anatomical position.

seen already, that there are two ways of reading this moral: either we see it as gender-oriented, warning weak husbands of predators upon their wives, or class-oriented, warning of the dangers of *mésalliances* perpetrated by weak fathers. She sees this second reading as the means by which our *fabliau* “adapts and inverts [story motifs] in order to reaffirm courtly values.”²⁵ But we may choose to consider neither reading as definitive and accept the ambiguity of the moral as appropriate to the continual, underlying tension between gender and class codes in this *fabliau*. The original of the moral in fact supports this approach. The moral to *Bérenger* is a proverb which Morawski identifies as belonging to the extremely popular twelfth-century proverb collection, the *Proverbes au vilain*.²⁶

In this collection, wise words are attributed to an emblematic *vilain*, a rural, everyman exemplar who embodies the notion of popular wisdom. As Sally Burch argues, “the exploitation of proverbs suggests a clerical author,” and the dedication to Philip of Flanders strongly suggests a courtly audience.²⁷ Many writers of courtly literature, such as Chrétien, Hue de Rotelande and the anonymous poet of *Partonopeu de Blois* drew upon the *dicta* of the *Proverbes au vilain* as a source of authority to support their observations on courtly matters.²⁸ In the hands of our *fableur* Guerin, the use of a *proverbe au vilain* to conclude his version of *Bérenger* acquires a special irony; the words of a courtly *vilain* are used at the end of a tale which has set out, at the start, to show that nothing worthwhile comes from the marriage of noble and peasant. Whether the moral is then meant to be directed against weak husbands or weak fathers is ultimately less important than the subversive impact of the proverb chosen to be the moral.²⁹ *Fabliaux* morals are not necessarily meant to be taken at face value; what we learn from this one is that even the aristocratic mantra “noble good, *vilain* bad” is liable to instability and mutability.

We have seen how version I of *Bérenger au long cul* achieves its comic effect by rewriting the conventions of familiar courtly genres within a *fabliau* framework,

²⁵ Brown, “*Bérenger au long cul* and the *pastourelle*” (see note 13); here 330.

²⁶ Joseph Morawski, *Proverbes français antérieurs au XVe siècle*. Classiques français du Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1925); the proverb in *Bérenger* is no. 82 in Morawski’s collection.

²⁷ Sally L. Burch, “The *Lai de L’Oiselet*, the *Proverbes au Vilain* and the Parable of the Sower,” *French Studies* 58 (2004): 1–14; here 2.

²⁸ Elisabeth Schulze-Busacker, *Proverbes et expressions proverbiales dans la littérature narrative du Moyen Age français: recueil et analyse*. Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 9 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985), 85.

²⁹ The way we are meant to respond to the morals in the *fabliaux* has been the subject of some critical debate. Although Joseph Bédier in his key early study of the genre, *Les fabliaux, études de littérature populaire et d’histoire littéraire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Librairie Emile Bouillon, 1893), 311, pointed out that we were not meant to take the morals, which appear in over half of the *fabliaux* corpus, literally. But, as Philippe Ménard points out in his study, *Les Fabliaux, contes à rire du Moyen Age*. Littératures modernes (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), despite their irreverent and often immoral content, the *fabliaux* do tend toward a reiteration of orthodox moral values, 108–42.

and that it uses the rural spaces as a *locus* where these conventions collide in mutually subversive ways. These subversions undermine simple moral judgments or readings of the *fabliau*, lending it a kind of instability which, as Simon Gaunt points, out, opens the door to textual mutability and *mouvance*.³⁰ We should not, therefore, be surprised to find more than one version of this *fabliau*: *Bérenger au lonc cul* mirrors the social fluidity which Gaunt sees characteristic of the genre, "for the composers and transmitters of these texts recognize no stable textual or authorial authority."³¹ We need now to return to version II to investigate whether further subversions of narrative codes are to be found in the rural spaces of *Bérenger au lonc cul* as this version relates it.³²

The principal ways in which this version differs from version I are the decreased emphasis on the status of the husband with the resulting degeneracy of the aristocracy, and its replacement with an increased emphasis on the husband's boasting as his principal shortcoming. The theme of boasting acts as a unifying theme throughout the narrative of version II, motivating the husband's deception of his wife and the necessity for his unmasking, and returning at the end of the tale in the narrator's closing remarks. Simon Gaunt has rightly argued that this emphasis on the consequences of ill-advised male boasting is part of a more strongly gender-centered approach in this version which is internally consistent and logical.³³ But is there any evidence that the poet of version II adopts a similar strategy of subversive rewriting focused upon gender issues as well as those that focus on class as part of this different approach? If we do find evidence of subversive rewriting that highlights gender stereotypes, then we would have grounds for asserting the right of version II to equal status with version I.

There is one small detail of version II which does function in this way and which I would like to examine first, before moving on to a much more significant example. In version I, both woodland episodes mention an oak tree as the species beneath which the knight dismounts in the first scene (v. 96) and from which he hangs his shield in order to smash it with his lance in the second (v. 181). This works well as an ironic undercutting of the status of the oak as a tree which is quite often associated with courtly heroes.³⁴

³⁰ Gaunt, *Gender and Genre* (see note 17); 280.

³¹ Gaunt, *Gender and Genre* (see note 17); 280.

³² The full text of version II, together with my Modern English translation, is given in the Appendix.

³³ "The author of *A* went to some lengths to supply a coherent moral frame to his plot, as his epilogue, which explicitly takes us back to his introduction of the husband, shows. Without the theme of class conflict, the *fabliau* becomes an attack on male boasting, and gender the dominant theme." Gaunt, *Gender and Genre* (see note 17); 280.

³⁴ See the quotations under the headword "chaisne" in Tobler-Lommatzsch *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925–1976), which include a number of examples from courtly romance, including Chrétien's *Erec et Enide* and *Yvain*.

But in version II, the species of tree changes in the first woodland scene; here the knight hangs his shield from a pear tree before proceeding to his violent assault upon it. The pear tree links into a rather different set of associations than the oak. As I have pointed out elsewhere, there are a series of sexual associations surrounding the pear which date back to well before the Middle Ages, but which are apparent in medieval texts.³⁵ The shape of the pear evokes both male and female genitalia, for example, and, more significantly, features in a story in which a stupid husband sees his wife making love to a squire beneath a pear tree, but is duped into believing he is witnessing an illusion generated by magical properties of the tree.

This is rewritten in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* as Carol Heffernan has shown,³⁶ but also features in Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligés*.³⁷ The network of associations linked to the pear in these examples—associations with a foolish husband, with an assertive wife who dupes this husband to enjoy her lover, and with both male and female sexual parts—are clearly visible in the subsequent *baiser honteux* to which the husband is subjected in the second woodland scene. The presence of the pear tree, which may seem insignificant at first reading, acquires new meaning when we reach the second scene, just as the scurrilous name "Bérenger au lonc cul" forces a re-reading of the first rural scene. But there is an even more suggestive meaning associated with the pear tree; the expression "faire le poirier" or "faire l'arbre fourchu" means to stand upon one's head with the legs in the air.³⁸ This is very nearly the posture which the wife will adopt in the second woodland encounter when she bends over to expose her rear to her shamed husband, and certainly involves the same inversion and exposure, the key aspects of that act as we saw above. The reference to the pear tree here brings in associations from both courtly literature and from non-courtly sources and sexual connotations. It thus encapsulates precisely the same generic mixture which forms the heart of Guerin's poetic approach. These associations center less on the question of class, however, and more upon the relationship between the genders, in keeping with the different focus of this version.

³⁵ See Penny Simons and Jessica Turnbull, "The Pear-Tree Episode in *Joufroi de Poitiers*," *French Studies Bulletin* 75 (Summer 2000): 2–4, and Penny Simons "Love, Marriage and Transgression in *Joufroi de Poitiers*: A Case of Literary Anarchism," *Discourses on Love, Marriage and Transgression*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 278 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 225–41.

³⁶ Carol Falvo Heffernan, "Contraception and the Pear Tree Episode of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*," *Journal of English and German Philology* 94 (1995): 31–41.

³⁷ Lucie Polak, "Cliges, Fenice et l'arbre d'amour," *Romania* 93 (1972): 303–16; here 311–12. See also Penny Simons, "Pear as Prophylactic? Conception and Composition in Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligés*," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 49 (2005): 18–41.

³⁸ The expression exists in Modern French and in Old French, where it is attested, according to Tobler-Lommatzsch, from circa 1200. See under headword "poirier" in *Tobler-Lommatzsch Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925–1976).

The choice of the pear tree in the first rural scene of version II adds a further layer to the intertextual and generic play which it introduces; it evokes associations with sexuality and with strong female characters who can outwit their male opponents. Gender oppositions are thus written into the scene, focusing primarily, however, on associations with the feminine; we need to examine another important intertext to find the complementary play with notions of the masculine and in particular with male boasting. There is a very important intertext for both versions of *Bérenger au lonc cul*, which critics have so far overlooked, and which we need to examine in order to understand the different ways in which the two versions rewrite and play with earlier models and conventions. This is the comic *chanson de geste* or heroic epic, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*.³⁹

The *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*,⁴⁰ which probably dates from the mid to late twelfth century,⁴¹ tells the story of Charlemagne's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and then on to Constantinople, where he and his twelve peers boast together one evening about the fantastic deeds they could perform to amaze the Emperor; unfortunately this jesting is overheard by a spy and they are challenged to make good their *gaps* (jests) or have their heads cut off.⁴² However, they are saved by the intervention of God who enables the first three boasts to be miraculously accomplished, after which the terrified Greeks call off the challenge and King Hugo submits in vassalage to Charlemagne.

There are a striking number of similarities between this text and *Bérenger au lonc cul*. First, and very obviously, the name Bérenger appears in both texts. Charlemagne's peers include Bérenger,⁴³ a character consistently included as one of the *douze pairs* in epics featuring Charlemagne and Roland, but the name is also given to other heroes of the chivalric epic genre as Percy points out.⁴⁴ Secondly, the boasting of Charlemagne and his knights takes place after they have enjoyed

³⁹ Roy Percy does allude to this text in the article "*Chansons de geste and Fabliaux*" (see note 21), 77; however, he does not explore the relationship between it and *Bérenger au lonc cul* in any detail.

⁴⁰ All references are to *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess, British Rencesvals Publications (Edinburgh: Société Rencesvals British Branch, 1998).

⁴¹ On the question of dating, see Burgess's "Introduction" to his edition of the *Pèlerinage* (see note 40), xi.

⁴² This work, which is known variously as *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* and the *Voyage de Charlemagne*, has been subject to a wide range of interpretations as to its nature and intent; earlier attempts are conveniently summarised by Ottó Süpek, "Une Parodie royale du Moyen Age," *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestiensis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae, Sectio Philologica Moderna* 8 (1977): 3–5; see also the different readings in Cobby, *Ambivalent Conventions* (see note 8); Margaret Burrell, "The *Voyage of Charlemagne*: Cultural Transmission or Cultural Transgression?," *Parergon*, new series 7 (1989): 47–53; Sharon Kinoshita, "The *Voyage de Charlemagne*: Mediterranean Palaces in the Medieval French Imaginary," *Olifant* 25 (2006): 255–70.

⁴³ Ernest Langlois, *Table des noms propres de toute nature compris dans les chansons de geste imprimées* (Paris: Librairie Emile Bouillon, 1904) cites characters called Bérenger in a wide range of *chansons de geste* including, for example, *Raoul de Cambrai* and *Le Charroi de Nîmes*.

⁴⁴ Percy, "An Instance of Heroic Parody" (see note 11), 105.

the lavish hospitality of Hugo in Constantinople, and the poet emphasizes that they have been drinking plenty of wine; and after the boasts have been overheard, Charlemagne points out to Hugo that their words were a consequence of customary behavior after good food and drink (*laisse* XL, vv. 652–56). The husband of *Bérenger au lonc* is also shown, in version II, as boastful after meals (v. 11); whereas version I took the opportunity to stress the husband's eating as exemplifying his cowardice, this version links it to a different theme, that of male boasting and the disastrous consequences which may follow it.

The most important parallel between our two texts, however, lies in the nature of the boasts made, which occur at two different points in the narratives. Firstly, in the scene in Constantinople, which features the French *gaps*, the hero Oliver boasts in *laisse* XXVII that he would be able to take King Hugo's daughter one hundred times in a single night if he were placed in the same bed as her. This is the first boast which is tested out by King Hugo, who is remarkably keen to hand his daughter over to test out the bet (*laisse* XLIII). The meeting of this challenge is unlike the two which follow, because Oliver does not, in fact, keep to the letter of his *gap*: he only takes the girl thirty times (v. 726), and does not do so until he has promised her his love and service, thereby securing her complicity in agreeing that he has fulfilled the terms of the jest. Secondly, there is no mention in the power of God helping Oliver to carry out his boast, unlike the subsequent boasters Guillaume and Bernard who are both explicitly enabled by God to perform their miraculous jests (vv. 751, 774). This boast of sexual prowess receives scurrilous treatment in the perverted sexual act which "Bérenger au Lonc Cul" requires of the husband in both versions of the *fabliau*.

More significant for our focus upon version II is the penultimate boast, made by Bertrand, which is remarkably similar to that found in both *Lestoire de Merlin* and our *fabliau*:

'Gabez, sire Bertram!' li emperere ad dit.
 'Volenters', dis li quens, 'tut al vostre plaisir.
 Treis escuz forz e roiz m'empruntez le matin,
 Puis m'em irrai la fors en sunz cel pin antif.
 La les me verrez ensemble par tel vertud ferir
 E voler cuntremunt; si m'escrierai si
 Que en quatre liues environ le pais
 Ne remandrat en bois cerf ne daim a fuir,
 Nule bise sauvage ne cheverol ne gupil.'
 'Par Deu', ço dist li escut 'mal gabement ad ci!
 Quant le saverat li reis Hugue, grans ert et maris.'

 ['Jest, Lord Bertrand', said the emperor.
 'Willingly', said the count, 'just as you wish.
 Get me three strong and sturdy shields tomorrow morning.

Then I shall go up to the top of that ancient pine outside,
 And there you will see me strike them together so forcibly
 And go flying through the air, shouting so loudly
 That for four leagues around this place
 No stag or buck will fail to fell from the wood,
 No woodland hind, no roe and no fox.
 'In God's name', said the spy, 'this is a bad jest!
 When King Hugo hears of it, he will be vexed and distressed.'⁴⁵

The key feature of Bertrand's boast is the noise that his clashing of the shields will create. In version II of *Bérenger au lonc cul* there is noticeably more emphasis on the noise which the fake knight makes. In the first woodland scene, the poet says he makes such a clamor, it would have been taken for thirty knights (vv. 54–55); the husband then makes much of the number of knights he has defeated – which he gives as seven (vv. 69–76) – bragging that he had so seriously injured four of them, that the other three ran away in terror. In the second woodland scene, we learn that the whole wood resounded at the noise he made with his lance and shield (vv. 151–2). Version I takes a subtly, but importantly different approach: there is no mention of noise in the first scene, which concentrates instead on the damage which is inflicted on the weapons, and in the second scene, the noise is hyperbolically attributed to that which might be made by a legion of demons (vv. 183–37); this actually draws attention away from the reality of the noise and its effects in the wood which comes out in version II and on to the wrecked weapons which are to be the “evidence” for the husband's supposed bravery. Version II thus remains closer to *Le Pèlerinage*, but also links the husband's boasting more consistently with its emphasis on this fault and its consequences.

The second important parallel between the *Pèlerinage* and *Bérenger au lonc cul* lies in the opening sequences of the two texts, which involve a boasting husband responding to his wife's doubts as to his prowess. In the *Pèlerinage*, Charlemagne boasts of his fine military bearing and his queen unwisely observes that she knows of one who is even more impressive, and whom she reluctantly names as King Hugo of Constantinople (*laissez* I–III); this initiates his journey east to prove himself against the supposed rival.

The family quarrel *topos* predates *Le Pèlerinage* in the epic corpus, featuring most significantly in the *Chanson de Guillaume*.⁴⁶ The poet of *Le Pèlerinage* thus works a comic rewriting of the *topos* in his text, making a motivation for acts of chivalric bravery against the Saracens in *La Chanson de Guillaume* into a subversive undercutting of the epitome of epic bravery, Charlemagne himself. In *Bérenger*, the

⁴⁵ Burgess, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (see note 40), *Laisse XXXVI*, vv. 591–601.

⁴⁶ Roy Percy has noted that this quarrel is a feature not only of *Bérenger*, *Le Pèlerinage*, and the *Chanson de Guillaume* but also of *La Gageure*. Percy, “*Chansons de geste* and the *fabliaux*” (see note 21), 77.

narrative also starts with the quarrel between husband and wife, which initiates an even more subversive undercutting of knightly bravery in the wife's shaming revenge. Guerin the *fableur* thus identifies a way in which his intertext had itself reworked an earlier motif and adds his own twist, trumping the comic effect of his predecessor. Not only this, but the three references to boasting which he borrows from *Le Pèlerinage* are cleverly intertwined in the ordeal of the *baiser honteux*. The most developed form of this play is actually that found in version II.

The humor which is already present in *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* is thus reworked by the poet or poets of both versions of *Bérenger au long cul* in ways that are typical of the medieval practice of *aemulatio* or imitative rewriting.⁴⁷ Elements from the *Pèlerinage* are taken and fitted into a new narrative structure in the *fabliau*: this involves changes to the original text, to make the material fit a different purpose, but nonetheless leaves sufficient clues as to the origin of the borrowing to alert the audience as to the poet's skilful manipulation of his sources. Versions I and II do this in different ways. Version I makes much less use of the gender focus on male boasting; whilst the husband is shown to be a braggart in v. 55, and the quarrel with his wife is used to motivate the knight's forays into the woods, this is something of a narrative dead end as the play with gender roles and stereotypes in this version is undercut by the play with other conflicting dichotomies.

Version II, however, takes the theme of male boasting of the *Pèlerinage* and making this the overarching theme of the *fabliau*. In this way, it actually works very effectively as an essentialist rewriting of the original text. The boasting of the husband is punished in two ways, both of which are borrowed from the *Pèlerinage*: the sexual prowess of Oliver, already marked in the *Pèlerinage* as problematic, because it cannot, as an act of fornication, be sanctioned by God, in contrast to the other jests, is rewritten as a scene in which a male signally fails to take a woman and must then cede his place to a true man who can satisfy her. The boast of Bertrand is also undercut in the woodland scenes of *Bérenger*: Instead of being a means of demonstrating superlative strength in the wielding of weapons, the damage wrought upon the shield and the noise it generates become evidence of the exact opposite. This paring down to the single element of the folly of male boasting creates a text which has a greater internal consistency than the *Pèlerinage*: the latter incorporates other parodic and humorous elements, such as the treatment of the notion of pilgrimage or of the veneration of religious relics which

⁴⁷ Interestingly, Léon Gautier referred to the *Pèlerinage* as a "fabliau épique," pointing out the generic contradictions found in this text. These remain in *Bérenger au long cul*, but are conveyed in the economy of the *fabliau* format, rather than in the epic form used in the *Pèlerinage*. Léon Gautier, *Les Epopées françaises: étude sur les origines et l'histoire de la littérature nationale*. 3 vols. (Paris: Société Générale de Librairie Catholique, 1865–1868), II, 260–305; here 260.

at times sit uneasily with the episode of the jests in the second part of the text.⁴⁸ This version thus exemplifies exactly what medieval poets attempted to do in their practice of *aemulatio* or “emulation”: the *integumentum* or “truth” of the original is teased out and is reworked into a new poetic shape which reflects that truth better than had the original.

Analysis of the rural spaces in *Bérenger au lonc cul* has revealed two important functions of these spaces: they are the location in which the typical dichotomies upon which the *fabliau* genre relies are played with in a variety of ways by the poet or poets of the two different versions we have examined; and, secondly, they are the spaces in which the poet/s display their skill in rewriting elements from a range of other sources, exploring the effects to be gained by a miscegenation of literary genres which parallels the *mésalliance* of aristocrat and peasant in the overall story. In version I, the oppositions between male and female and knight and *vilain* collide and each works to undercut the apparently black and white ethos of the other. In version II, the undercutting is less obvious and less unsettling, as the gender theme emerges more strongly as the overarching direction of the narrative. This does not, however, preclude skilful play with generic expectations and a layering of intertextual references which adds to the comic richness of the tale. So both versions exploit a variety of other sources, both within the *fabliau* genre, and from the contrasting courtly genres of epic, courtly romance or lyric in order to display skill in rewriting and combining “old matter” in new and innovative ways. We can conclude from this that focusing on questions about which of these two versions is superior, or which precedes the other as previous critics have tended to do, is ultimately far less fruitful than recognizing the different merits of each. Just as *Bérenger au lonc cul* rewrites other texts for humorous purposes, so it in turn may be rewritten to achieve different effects. If we appreciate our two versions as expositions of the effects to be gained from *aemulatio*, we come closer to an appreciation of the poetic skills which are demonstrated in both of them.

⁴⁸ Burgess describes the different components of the narrative in the “Introduction” to his edition of *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, (see note 40); he points out that there is not attempt by the poet to create a “numerically balanced structure for the text, even for the two central episodes”; here xii.

Appendix

Version I

“De Berengier au Long Cul”: Old French text edited by Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard, *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, (Assen, Maastricht: van Gorcum, 1988), IV; 270–77. English translation by Penny Simons

Tant ai dit contes et flabiaus Que je ai fait, viez et noviaus, Ne finé passé a un an! Foi que doi Deu et saint Johan, Ne cuit que j’an sache mais nul Fors de Berangier au lonc cul N’avez vos mie eü encore. Mais par mon chief, g’en dirai ore, Si tost que ne tarderai gaire!	4
Or oez que je voil retraire Que il avint en Lombardie, O la gent n’est gaires hardie, D’un chevalier qui ot pris fame —Ce m’est vis, une gentis dame, Fille d’un riche chastelain. Et cil estoit fiz d’un vilain, D’un usurier riche et comblé, Qui mout avoit et vin et blé; Brebiz et vaches, et deniers Ot a monciaus et a setiers. Et li chastelains li devoit Tant que paier ne le pooit, Ainz dona a son fil sa fille. Ensi lo bon lignage aville, Et dechiet tot et va a honte, Que li chastelain et li conte Se marient bas por avoir; Si doivent grant honte avoir Et grant domage, si ont il: Li chevalier mauvais et vil Et coart issent de tel gent, Qui miauz aiment or et argent Que il ne font chevalerie. Ensi est largesce perie, Ensi dechiet enor et pris! Mais a ce que je ai empris	12 16 20 24 28 32 36

Repaireré por traire a chief.
 Li chevaliers a grant meschief
 Maria sa fille au vilain,
 Sel fist chevalier de sa main. 40
 Cil l'amená, si sont ensamble
 Plus de dis anz si com moi samble.
 Li chevaliers amoit repos;
 Il ne prisoit ne pris ne los, 44
 Ne chevalerie deus auz:
 Tartres amoit et flaons chاوز,
 Et mot despisoit gent menue.
 La dame s'est aperceüe 48
 Que ses sires est si mauvais
 Que pires de lui ne fu mais
 por armes prendre ne baillier:
 Miaus enmoit estraím et paillier 52
 A menoier qu'escu ne lance.
 Donc set ele bien sanz dotance,
 A ce qu'il ert mout parliers,
 Qu'il n'est pas nez de chevaliers 56
 Ne estraiz de gentil lignaje.
 Don li rementoit son paraje
 O tant a vaillanz chevaliers,
 Et as armes et as destriers: 60
 "A sejourner ne pris je rien."
 Donc entandi li vilains bien
 Q'ele nel dist se por lui non.
 "Dame, dist il, j'é tel renon, 64
 N'avez nul si hardi parant
 Que je n'aie plus hardemant
 Et plus valor et plus proece.
 Je sui chevaliers sanz perece, 68
 Lo meillor de toz, par ma main:
 Seviaus vos le verroiz demain,
 Se mes enemis puis trover!
 Demain me voldrai esprover, 72
 Qu'i m'ont desfié par envie.
 Ja nus n'en portera la vie,
 Que ges metrai a tel meschief
 Que chascuns i perdra lo chief: 76
 Tuit seront mort, cui qu'il enuit!"
 Ensi trespasèrent la nuit.
 Et l'andemain, a l'ajornant,
 Li chevaliers leva avant, 80
 Si fist ses armes apporter

Et son cors richement armer;
 Que armes avoit il mout beles,
 Trestotes fresches et noveles! 84
 Qant li chevaliers fu armez
 Et desus son cheval montez,
 Si se porpanse qu'il fera,
 Comment sa fame decevra, 88
 Q'el le tingne a bon chevalier.
 Un bois mout grant et mout plenier
 Avoit mout pres de sa maison:
 Li chevaliers a esperon 92
 S'an vet, tot droit en la forest,
 Jusqu'el mileu ne fist arest.
 Qant a mi lo bois fu venuz,
 Desoz un chasne est descenduz; 96
 Son cheval as resnes estache,
 Son escu pant a une estache
 D'une branche seche fechiee.
 Après a s'espee sachiee 100
 Si fiert en l'escu comme fos,
 Mien esciant plus de cent cous:
 Tot l'a tranchié et tot malmis.
 Puis avoit son fort espié pris, 104
 Sel brisa en quatre troçons.
 Après est montez es arçons
 De la sele de son cheval.
 Puis s'an vait poignant tot un val, 108
 Tot droitement a sa maison.
 De sa lance tint un troçon,
 Et de l'escu n'ot c'un cartier
 Qu'il avoit porté tot entier. 112
 Lo cheval par la resne tint.
 Sa fame a l'ancontre lui vint:
 Au descendre li tint l'estrié.
 Li chevaliers la fiert del pié, 116
 Qui molt iert fiers de grant meniere.
 "Traiez vos tost, fait il, arrier!
 Que sachiez bien: n'est mie droiz
 Qu'a si bon chevalier tochoiz 120
 Con je sui, ne si alosé.
 Il n'a si preu ne si ossé
 En tot vostre lignage: au mains
 Ne sui mie truanz vilains, 124
 Ains ai lous de chevalerie!"
 La dame fu tote esbaïe,

Qant el vit son escu percié
 Et frait lo fust de son espié. 128
 Selonc ce qu'il li fait acroire,
 Ne set que dire ne que croire:
 Ne set el mont que ele face,
 Que li chevaliers la menace 132
 Que ver lui n'aut ne qu'el n'i toche.
 La dame tint close la boche
 Onques un mot ne respondi.
 Que vos diroie? Ensi servi 136
 Li chevaliers de ceste guille,
 Et tenoit la dame mout vile
 Et despisoit tot son lignage
 —Don ele nel tenoit a sage. 140
 Un jor refu du bois venuz
 Li chevaliers; et ses escuz
 Fu estroiez et depeciez,
 Mais il n'ert cassez ne bleciez, 144
 Ne ses hauberz n'a point de mal.
 Et vit tot haitié son cheval,
 Qui n'est lassez ne recreüz.
 N'est pas de la dame creüz 148
 A cele fois li chevaliers!
 Or dit qu'il a mort ses gerriers
 Et ses enemis confonduz,
 Et a force pris et panduz. 152
 Bien set la dame et aperçoit
 Que par sa borde la deçoit;
 Et panse, s'il va ja mais
 El bois, qu'ele ira après, 156
 Et si verra qanqu'il fera
 Et commant il se contandra.
 Ensin s'est cele porpansee,
 Et qant vint a la matinee, 160
 Li chevaliers se fist armer,
 Et dit que il ira tuer
 Trois chevaliers quel menaçoient,
 Et qui son mal li porchaçoient: 164
 Gaitant lo vont, don mout se plaint.
 La dame li dit que il maint
 De sergenz armez trois o quatre,
 Si porra plus seür combatre. 168
 "Dame, je n'i manrai nelui:
 Par moi lor movré tel enui
 Que ja nus n'en estordra vis!"

A tant s'est a la voie mis:	172
Par grant aïr el bois se fiert.	
Et la dame unes armes quiert	
Comme chevaliers s'est armee,	
et puis sor un cheval montee.	176
Cele, qui n'a soing de sejour,	
S'an vait tost après son seignor,	
Qui ja s'est ou bois enbatuz.	
Et ses escuz estoit panduz	180
A un chasne, et il i feroit:	
A l'espee lo depeçoit.	
Si fait tel noise et tel martire,	
Qui l'oïst, il poïst bien dire	184
Ce sont cent et mile deiable.	
Ne lo tenez vos mie a fable:	
Grant noise fait et grant tampeste!	
Et la dame un petit s'areste,	188
Qant ele a la chose veüe:	
Esbaïe est et esperdue.	
Et qant assez ot escouté,	
Avant a lo cheval hurté	192
Ver son mari, si li escrie:	
"Vassaus, vassaus, c'est grant folie	
Que vos mon bois si decopez!	
Mauvais sui se vos m'eschapez,	196
Que ne soiez mis en uns giez!	
Vostre escu por qoi peçoiez,	
Qui ne vos avoit riens mesfait?	
Mout avez or meü fol plait,	200
Que a lui avez gerre prise.	
Mal dahaz ait qui or vos prise,	
Que vos estes coarz provez!"	
Li chevaliers s'est regardez,	204
Qant il a les moz entanduz;	
Esboïz est et esperduz.	
La dame n'a pas coneüe.	
Do poin li chiet l'espee nue	208
Et trestoz li sans li foï.	
"Sire, fait il, por Deu merci!	
Se je vos ai de rien mesfait,	
Jo vos amanderai sanz plait,	212
A vostre gré mout volantiers	
Vos donrai avoir et deniers."	
La dame dit: "Se Deus me gart,	
Vos parleroiz d'autre Renart	216

Car je vos partirai un jeu:
 Ainz que vos movoiz de cest leu,
 Comment que vos jostoiz a moi;
 Et je vos creant et otroi, 220
 Se vos cheez, ja n'i faudroiz:
 Maintenant la teste perdroiz,
 Que ja n'avrai de vos pitié!
 Ou je descendrai jus a pié, 224
 Devant vos m'iré abaissier:
 Vos me vandroiz o cu baissier
 Tres o mileu o par delez.
 Prenez lo quel que vos volez 228
 De cez jeus, ice vos covient!"
 Li chevaliers, qui dote et crient,
 Et qui plains est de coardie,
 Dit que il n'i jostera mie. 232
 "Sire, dist il, je ai voé,
 Ne josterai a home né;
 Mais descendez, si ne vos griet,
 Et je ferai qanque vos siet." 236
 La dame n'i volt respit qerre:
 Tot maintenant descent a terre;
 Sa robe prant a solever,
 Devant lui prant a estuper. 240
 Et dit: "Tornez ça vostre face!"
 Et cil esgarde la crevace
 Do cul et del con: ce li sanble
 Que trestot se tiennent ensanble. 244
 A lui meïsmes panse et dit
 Onques mais si grant cul ne vit.
 Don l'a baisé de l'orde pais
 A guise de coart mauvais, 248
 Mout pres de tro iloc endroit:
 Bien l'a or mené a destroit!
 A tant la dame rest montee.
 Li chevaliers l'a apelee: 252
 "Biaus sire, vostre non me dites,
 Puis si vos en alez toz quites!
 Vasaus, mes nons n'ert ja celez!
 Onques mais teus ne fu nomez, 256
 De mes parans n'i a il nul:
 J'é non Berengiers au lonc cul,
 Qui a toz les coarz fait honte."
 A ce mot a finé son conte, 260
 Si s'an est en maison alee;

Au miauz que pot s'est desarmee.
 Puis a mandé un chevalier
 Que ele amoit et tenoit chier: 264
 Dedanz sa chanbre tot a aise
 L'an moine, si l'acole et baise.
 Estes vos li sires revient
 Del bois. Cele, qui po le crient, 268
 Ne se daigna por lui movoir;
 Son ami fait lez lui seoir.
 Li chevaliers toz abosmez
 S'an est dedanz la chanbre entrez. 272
 Qant vit la dame et son ami,
 Sachiez point ne li abeli!
 "Dame, fait il isnelement,
 Vos me servez vilainement, 276
 Qui home amenez ceienz.
 Vos le conparroiz, par mes danz!
 Taisez vos an, fait el, malvais!
 Or gardez que no dites mais, 280
 Tantost de vos me clamerioie
 Por le despit que j'en avroie,
 Si seriez cous et jalous.
 A cui vos clameriiez vos 284
 De moi, par l'ame vostre pere?
 A cui? A vostre chier compere,
 Qui vos tint ja en son dongier:
 Ce est mes sires Berangier 288
 Al lonc cul qui vos feroit honte!"
 Qant cil oit que cele li conte,
 Mout en ot grant duel et grant ire;
 Onques plus ne li osa dire, 292
 Desconfit se sant et maté.
 Et cele fait sa volanté,
 Qui ne fu sote ne vilaine:
 A mol pastor chie los laine! 296

[I have told so many tales and fabliaux which I've composed, both old and new, it's taken more than a year to complete them! By the faith I owe God and Saint John (4), I don't think I know any more, save that of Long-assed Bérenger and you haven't heard it yet. But I swear I'll tell it now (8), straight away and without delay!

So hear what I have to tell, how once upon a time in Lombardy, where people are not brave in the least (12), there was a knight who had taken a wife, so I believe, a noble lady, the daughter of a rich castellan. This knight was the son of a commoner (16), a rich moneylender, loaded with wealth, who had plenty of wine

and wheat, sheep and cows, and he had coins by the heap and the sackful (20). And the castellan owed this man so much money that he could not pay him; so instead he gave his daughter to the son. Thus good families degenerate (24), go right downhill and come to a bad end, for castellans and counts marry beneath them for money. They should be ashamed (28) and suffer for it, as indeed they do. Bad and base knights and cowards descend from such people, who love gold and silver more (32) than they do knightly honor. Thus largesse has perished, thus honor and worth decline! But now I will return to what I have started (36) and will see it through to the end. The knight did great wrong and married his daughter to the commoner, and then he knighted him with his own hand (40). The base man took her as his wife and I believe they were together for more than ten years. The knight loved idleness; he didn't give a fig about honor, praise (44) or chivalry; he liked pies and hot custard tarts, and he treated lowly people scornfully. The lady noticed (48) her husband was so worthless that there was no one worse than him at taking up and defending arms: he preferred to pitch straw (52) rather than wield shield or lance. Then she knew without a doubt that, for all his boasting, he was no true knight (56) nor born of a noble line. Then she remembered her own family line where there were many brave knights, skilled at arms and on horseback (60). "I care nothing for idleness," she said.

The knight understood perfectly well that she meant this for him. "My lady," he said, "I have a brilliant reputation (64); and no member of your family is so brave that I cannot outdo him in bravery, valor and chivalric prowess; I am a knight without a hint of sloth (68), the best in the world, I swear it! You will see this for yourself tomorrow, if I can find my enemies! Tomorrow I wish to prove myself (72) against those who have betrayed me through envy. Not one of them will come away with his life for I shall deal with them so fiercely that everyone will lose his head (76). They'll all be dead, do what they will!" They left the matter at that that night. The next day, as day broke the knight rose (80) and had his armor and weapons brought and armed himself magnificently; for he had very fine armor, completely new and undamaged (84)!

When the knight had armed and had mounted his horse, then he began to think about what he would do and how he could deceive his wife (88) so that she would think he was a good knight. There was a big, thick wood which was near to his home; the knight rode rapidly off (92), straight into the forest, not stopping until he reached the middle. When he had come to the center of the wood, he dismounted beneath an oak (96); he tethered his horse by its reins and hung his shield on a pole of bound dry branches.⁴⁹ Then he drew out his sword (100) and beat the shield like a madman, dealing it more than a hundred blows, I'm sure; he slashed and hacked it to pieces. Next he took his sturdy lance (104) and broke

⁴⁹ The meaning of vv. 98–99 is unclear, and Noomen and Boogaard point out that the readings of both mss B and D are suspect at this point. They suggest that what is happening here is that the knight has used dry branches to fashion a rudimentary *quitaine* to serve as a target for him to strike with the lance. See "Notes et éclaircissements" to the text of *Berengier au lonc cul*, *Nouveau recueil complet*, vol IV, 418.

it into four. Then he mounted onto the bow of his saddle, and, spurring on the horse, went off down a valley (108), straight back to his home. He had one fragment of his lance, and had only a quarter of his shield remaining from the whole he had taken out with him (112). He held his horse by the reins. His wife came out to greet him; she held his stirrup so he could dismount. But the knight kicked her away (116), using all his great strength: "Get back at once!" he said. "And know this: it is not right for you to touch so fine a knight (120) nor one as highly esteemed as I am. There's none so brave or daring in *your* family; at least I am not base or unworthy (124), but have won knightly praise instead!"

The lady was completely dumbfounded when she saw the battered shield and the shattered wood of the lance shaft (128); judging from what he would have her believe she did not know what to think; and she did not know what in the world to do, for the knight had threatened her (132) if she came near him or touched him. So the lady kept her mouth shut and said not a word in reply. What more can I say (136)? In this way the knight made use of this trick and despised his wife, mocking all her family, which she considered folly on his part (140). One day the knight again came back from the wood; his shield was battered and full of holes, but he had not a scratch on him (144) and his hauberk showed no sign of damage. And she saw his horse was still fresh and was neither tired nor worn out. This time the lady did not believe the knight (148)! Now he said he had killed his attackers and had defeated his enemies, captured and hanged them (152). The lady knew well and saw that he was tricking her with some ruse; and she thought that if he went again to the forest she would go after him (156), and she would see whatever it was he was doing, and how he acquitted himself in battle. Thus the lady resolved to act.

And then, when dawn came (160), the knight called for his arms and said he was going to kill three knights who were threatening him and who were causing him great trouble (164) by ambushing him, committing a great offence. The lady suggested to him that he should take three or four armed men with him, so that he would be better able to defeat them (168). "My lady, I shall take no-one with me; single-handedly I will launch such an assault on them that none will come out alive." With this he went (172) charging off to the wood. Meanwhile the lady sought out a set of armor; she armed herself like a knight and then mounted a horse (176). She rode off without delay straight after her husband, who had already rushed into the wood. He had hung his shield (180) up on an oak tree and was beating it; he was hacking it to pieces with his sword. He was making such a noise and such a racket that anyone who heard it would have said (184) that a hundred thousand devils were there. Don't think I'm making this up; he was making a mighty din and tumult! The lady paused a moment (188); when she saw this sight, she was dumbfounded and horrified. And when she had heard enough she urged her horse (192) towards her husband and yelled out to him, "Vassal, vassal, you are out of your mind, slashing up my wood like this! I'll be damned if you escape from me (196) without being tied into a pair of falcon's jesses! And why are you abusing your shield like that when it has never done you any harm?

You are acting stupidly (200) to wage war against it. A curse on anyone who values you, you proven coward!"

The knight looked down (204) when he heard these words; he was stunned and dismayed. He did not recognize the lady. His naked sword fell from his hand (208) and his blood ran cold. "For God's sake mercy, sir!" he cried. "If I have injured you in any way, I will make restitution without delay (212), I will gladly give you treasure or money." The lady replied, "So help me God, you'll soon change your tune (216) because I'm going to offer you a dare: before you leave this place, I command you to joust with me — and I swear to you (220) that if you fall, there'll be no way out, you'll lose your head immediately for I shall show you no mercy! Alternatively, I shall dismount (224) and I will bend over in front of you and you will come and kiss my ass right in the middle or to the side. Choose whichever of these two dares you prefer (228), that is what you must do!" The knight, who was terrified, and who was a complete coward, declared that he would not joust (232): "Sir," he said, "I have made a vow that I will never joust with any man born; so get down, if you would be so kind, and I will do what you have asked (236)." The lady saw no need to delay, but got straight down, lifted up her garment and bent down in front of him (240). "Sir, put your face right there," she said. And he gazed upon the crack of her cunt and her ass; for it seemed to him that they were both joined together (244). He thought to himself that he had never seen such a huge asshole. Then he gave it the kiss of shame as befitted such a base, cowardly man (248), right there by her asshole. Now she has shamed him good and proper!

The lady then stood back up. The knight called to her (252), "Fair sir, be good enough to tell me your name since you leave having won the game." "Vassal, my name shall not be kept secret! No-one else has ever had such a name (256) and no-one in my family shares it: I am called Long-assed Bérenger, who brings shame to cowards." Thus she ended her story (260), and returned home; as quickly as she could she disarmed, and then she sent for a knight whom she loved and greatly esteemed (264). She led him calmly into her chamber and she embraced and kissed him. And now, lo and behold, here's the knight back from the wood. The lady, who was no longer afraid of him (268), did not bother to pay him the least attention, but had her lover sit beside her. The knight, defeated and dejected, entered the room (272). When he saw the lady and her lover, he did not like it one bit, I can tell you! "My lady," he said immediately, "you're behaving badly towards me (276) by bringing another man in here. You'll pay for it, I swear." "Shut up, worthless fool!" she said, "And take care not to say any more (280), for I would immediately bring a complaint against you for the insult, and then you would be seen for a cuckold and a jealous husband." "And just who would you complain to about me, if you please (284)?" "Who? I'd complain to your dear friend who just a short while ago had you in his power; that is Sir Long-assed Bérenger (288) who would bring shame to you." When the knight heard what she said he was filled with grief and anger: he would never dare argue with her again (292) for he knew he was beaten and outwitted. And she did whatever she wanted,

for she was neither a fool, nor dishonorable. When the shepherd's weak, the wolf
shits wool (296).]

Version II

"De Berengier au Long Cul": Version A, Diplomatic Old French text by Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard, *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, volume IV (Assen, Maastricht: van Gorcum, 1988); 253–69, additional editing and Modern English translation by Penny Simons

Puis que fabloier m'atalente	
Et je i ai mise m'entent,	
Ne lerai qu'encor ne vous die.	
Jadis avint en Lombardie	4
D'un chevalier qui avoit fame;	
N'ot el país plus bele dame,	
Ne plus cortoise, ne plus sage,	
Et si estoit de haut parage.	8
Mes son mari ert de villains;	
Et si ert pereceus et vains,	
Et vanterres après mengier:	
Mout se fesoit bon chevalier	12
Par parole! En .iii. ou en .iiii.	
Voudroit il par son cors abatre,	
Et chascun jor a l'avesprer	
Se fesoit richement armer,	16
Puis s'en montoit sor .i. destrier;	
Ja ne finast de chevauchier.	
Dedanz .i. bois toz seus entroit;	
Quant dedenz ert, si s'arestoit	20
Et esgardoit tout a loisir	
Que nus ne le peüst veir.	
Si aloit pendre son escu	
A .i. arbre grant et foillu.	24
De l'espee nue i feroit	
Granz cops, que tout le depecoit,	
S'en fesoit les pieces voler,	
Et depicier et estroer	28
Que point n'i demoroit d'entier.	
Puis se remetoit el sentier,	
L'escu au col, la lance frete,	
Com s'il eüst proëce fete.	32
S'en revenoit mout fierement,	
Et disoit a toute la gent	

Qu'il avoit .ii. chevaliers mors,
 Par hardement et par esfors: 36
 Mout s'i estoit bien combatuz.
 De plusors gens estoit creuz,
 Et disoient qu'il ert mout prouz —
 Ainsi les amusoit trestouz. 40
 Par mainte foiz ainsi servi,
 Tant c'une autre foiz s'en issi;
 Dist qu'il iroit fere cembel.
 .I. escu tout fres et novel 44
 Li avoit sa fame baillié,
 Mout bien fet et mout bien taillié,
 Et une lance longue et droite.
 Et il tant de l'aller exploite 48
 Qu'il est venuz el bois ramu.
 Maintenant a pris son escu
 Si le pendi a .i. perier.
 Puis a feru du branc d'acier, 52
 Et fesoit .i. si fier martyre,
 Qui l'oïst il peust bien dire,
 Que plus de .xxx. en i eüst.
 Et por ce que l'en le creüst 56
 Sa lance ra a .ii. poins prise,
 Si la fraint et si la debrise
 Ne l'en remest que .i. tronçon.
 Puis s'en revient en sa meson; 60
 Si descent et se desarma.
 Sa fame mout se merveilla
 Qu'il estoit si tost revenue,
 S'ert tout depecié son escu 64
 Comme si'il venist d'un tornoi.
 "Sire, fet ele, par ma foi,
 Ne sai ou vous avez esté;
 Mes vostre escu l'a comparé! 68
 — Dame j'ai trové chevaliers
 Plus de .vii., corageus et fiers,
 Qui me vindrent ferir et batre.
 Mes j'en ai si blecié les .iiii., 72
 Por mon escu que percié orent,
 Que puis relever ne se porent.
 Et li autre troi s'en fuirent
 De la paor quant il ce virent. 76
 Onques ne m'oserent atendre!"
 La dame n'est mie a apprendre:
 Maintenant sot et aperçut

Comment son seignor le deçut.	80
Bien sot que onques en sa vie	
Ne fist par sa chevalerie	
Ne prouesce ne hardement.	
Mes ainsi le dit a la gent,	84
Et lor fet tel menconge acroire	
Dont il n'i a parole voire.	
Des se porpensse la dame,	
Et a juré son cors et s'ame	88
Que s'il fet tant que mes i aille,	
Ele voudra savoir sanz faille	
Comfetement il le fera,	
Et comment il s'atornera,	92
Et qui son escu le depiece	
Dont il n'apporte c'une piece.	
Chascune nuit quant il repere	
Ainsi porpensse son afere	96
La dame, mes mot ne sona.	
Et li sires la salua	
Maintenant qu'il fu revenuz;	
Au col li a ses braz tenduz	100
Et dis, "Dame, par Saint Omer	
Vous me devez mout bien amer	
Et honorer et tenir chier,	
Que il n'a si bon chevalier	104
De moi desi en Normendie!	
—Biaus Sire, je ne vous haz mie;	
Et encor plus vous ameroie	
De tout mon cuer, se je savoie	108
Que tels fussiez com dit m'avez.	
—Dame, dit il, mes mieus assez!	
Et plus ai force et hardement	
Que je ne di, mon escient."	112
A tant lessierent la parole,	
Et li sires la dame acole;	
.V. fois la baise, voire .vi.	
Puis se sont au mengier assis	116
Que l'en lor avoit apresté.	
Après, quant il orent soupé,	
Li lit sont fet, si vont gesir.	
Quant lassé furent de dormir,	120
Et li solaus fu haut montez,	
Li chevaliers si s'est levez,	
Et se vesti, et se chauca,	
Et ses armes redemanda.	124

Quant il fut armez, bel et gent
 A la dame le congié prent.
 "Dame, dist il, je m'en revois
 Querre aventures en cest bois. 128
 Sachiez se je puis rencontrer
 Homme qui ost a moi jouter,
 Ja eschaper ne me porra –
 Je le prendrai ou il morra! 132
 –Sire, fet ele, or en pensez!"
 A tant est le destrier montez,
 Si s'en reva par le boschage.
 Et la dame, qui mout fu sage, 136
 Dist par soi qu'après veut aller
 Por savoir et por esprover
 Son hardement et son barnage,
 Si qu'el n'i ait point de domage. 140
 La dame s'est mout tost armee
 Et come chevalier adoubee;
 Le hauberc vest, l'espee a cainte,
 De tost armer ne s'est pas fainte, 144
 Et sus son chief l'iaume laça;
 El destrier monte si s'en va.
 Onques n'i ot resne tenue.
 Tant oirre qu'el bois est venue, 148
 Et vit son signor descendu
 Qui depieçoit tout son escu,
 Et une tel noise fesoit
 Que li bois en retentissoit; 152
 De nului ne se donoit garde.
 Et quant la dame le regarde,
 Ainz mes ne fu si esbahie.
 Au plus tost qu'ele pot li crie 156
 "Sire vassaus, qu'avez vous quis
 En mon bois ne en mon porpris
 Qui mon bois si me depeciez,
 Et de vostre escu vous vengiez 160
 Qui ne vous avoit rien mesfet?
 Certes, fet ele, c'est trop let!
 Quel gerre avez a l'escu prise?
 Dehez ait qui mieus vous en prise! 164
 Cil escuz ne set riens entendre;
 Je le voudrai vers vous desfendre.
 Il vous covient a moi jouter;
 Vous n'en poez par el passer 168
 Ja n'i aura longue atendue."

Quant il a la dame entendue
 Ainz mes ne fu si tormentez.
 Tout maintenant est arestez 172
 Et vit cele qui le manace;
 Tal paor a ne set qu'il face,
 Quar de combatre n'a il soing.
 L'espee li chei du poing, 176
 De mauvestié et de perece.
 Et la dame vers lui s'adrece
 L'espee trete, le requiert,
 Du plat sor le hiaume le fiert 180
 Tel cop que tout en retenti.
 Quant li chevaliers l'a senti,
 Si cuida bien estre afolez:
 De la paor est ius versez. 184
 Onc ne fu tels qu'il se meüst:
 .I. petit enfant li peüst
 Trete les ieus hors de la teste
 Autressi comme a une beste. 188
 Ja ne li osast contredire.
 La dame li commence a dire
 "Or tost vassaus, joustez a mi!"
 Li chevaliers crie, "Merci, 192
 Sire, sor sainz vous jurerai;
 Ja mes en cest bois n'enterrai,
 N'a mon escu ne ferai mal.
 Si me lessiez sor mon cheval 196
 Monter et m'en puisse raler!
 —Il vous covendra d'el parler,
 Fet ele, avant que m'eschapez.
 Or esgardez que vous ferez: 200
 Que je vous vueil .i. geu partir.
 Orendroit vous covient morir
 S'ert de vous finee la gerre.
 Je descendrai jus a la terre, 204
 Devant vous m'irai abessier;
 Si vous covient mon cul besier —
 No poez garir autrement!
 —Sire, vostre commandement 208
 Ferai; or en venez a moi.
 —Certes, fet ele, je l'otroi."
 Ele descent, vers lui s'en va,
 Sa robe contremont leva, 212
 Si s'estupa devant sa face.
 Et cil vit une grant crevace

Du cul et du con; ce li samble Que trestout se tenoit ensamble.	216
Onques mes, se Dieus li ait Ce dist, aussi lonc cul ne vit! Lors l'a besié et acliné.	
Mout l'a bien a son droit mené Cele qui le tient a bricon! Et cil li demande son non, Dont il est et de quele terre.	220
"Vassaus qu'avez-vous a enquerre, Fet ele, ne a demander? Vous ne porriiez pas trover Tel non en trestout cest païs.	224
Bien le vous raconte et devis, De mes parenz n'i a il nul. J'ai non Berengier au lonc cul; A trestoz les coars faz honte!"	228
A tant sor son cheval remonte La dame, et en meson s'en va. Tantost por son ami manda, Qui il venist a li parler;	232
Et il i vint sanz demorer. Grant joie li fet et el lui, Si se sont couchié ambedui En .i. lit por lor talent fere.	236
Et li chevaliers s'en repere Du bois et entre en sa meson. Sa gent le metent a reson, Et demandent com li esta.	240
"Certes, dist il, mout bien me va! Delivree ai toute la terre De cels qui me fesoient gerre; Ses ai vaincuz et afolez."	244
A tant est en la chambre entrez; Sa fame trueve toute a aise, Ou son ami l'acole et baise; Ne se daigna por lui repondre.	248
Li chevaliers commence a grondre Quant il le vit—mout l'en pesa, Mout durement la maneça: "Dame, dist il, mar le penssastes	252
Quant estrange homme o vous couchastes! Vous en morrez, por voir le di!" Et la dame li respondi: "Tesiez vous! en dist el mauvés.	256

Gardez que n'en parlez ja mes!	260
Se je vous en oi plus parler,	
Le matinet sanz arrester,	
Ce sachiez vous, sanz atargier	
Irai a seignor Berengier	264
Au lonc cul, qui a grant puissance.	
Bien me fera de vous vengeance."	
Quant li chevaliers l'a oïe	
N'ot mes tel merveille en sa vie.	268
Or set il bien qu'ele savoit	
Tout ce qu'avenu li estoit;	
Onques puis riens ne li en dist.	
Et la dame tout son bon fist,	272
Que por lui n'en lessast noient.	
Por ce desfent a toute gent,	
Qui se vantent de maint afere	
Dont il ne sevent a chief trete,	276
Qu'il lessent ester lor vantance.	
Et je vous di bien sanz faillance,	
Quant il s'en vantent c'est folie.	
Ici est ma reson fenie.	
Explicit de berengier au lonc cul.	

[Since I desire to recount a *fabliau* and I have set myself to do it, I will not delay in telling you one. Once upon a time in Lombardy (4), it happened that a knight had a wife. There was no more beautiful lady in the land, nor one more courtly or wise, and she was nobly born (8).

But her husband was of base stock; and he was lazy and vain, and he would boast after meals. He made himself out to be a fine knight (12) by his words! He wanted to do fine physical deeds by means of three or four words. And each evening, he would get himself finely armed (16) and would mount his horse. He would ride non-stop and would go alone into a wood. Once there, he would halt (20) and look carefully around to make sure no-one could see him. Then he would hang his shield from a large, leafy tree (24). And with his bare sword he would beat it with great blows, hacking it to pieces and making splinters fly from it, until he had smashed holes in it (28) and it was all slashed to bits. Then he would get back to the road, with the shield round his neck and his lance broken, as if he had carried out act of knightly bravery (32). And he would go home very proud and tell everyone that he had killed two knights by his bravery and strength (36), and that he had acquitted himself with honor. Many people believed him, and said he was a very brave knight. And so he tricked them all (40). He used this trick many times, until another day came when he went out, saying he was going out to joust. His wife had brought him a fresh, new shield (44) which was well made and fashioned, and she gave him a straight, long lance. And he rushed off (48) until he came to the thick wood. Then he took his shield and hung it from a pear tree. Then he beat it with his steel sword (52), and inflicted such an attack upon it that

anyone hearing it would have thought there were thirty knights there. And, so that people would believe him (56), he also took his lance in his hands and broke and splintered it until there was just a stump remaining. Then he went back to his house (60), dismounted and disarmed.

His wife was amazed that he had come back so soon and that his shield was all hacked to pieces (64) as if he had come from a tournament. "Sire," she said, "by my faith, I do not know where you have been, but your shield has certainly suffered damage (68)!" "My lady, I met more than seven knights, all brave and fierce, who beat and attacked me. But I wounded four of them (72), for damaging my shield, such that they couldn't get up. And the other three fled in fear when they saw it (76). They didn't dare wait around for me!" The lady was not slow to learn: she now saw and knew how her lord was deceiving her (80). She knew well that he had never in his life achieved any deed of prowess or bravery by his chivalry. But that was what he would tell people (84), and he made them believe such lies in which there was not one word of truth.

From then on the lady began to reflect and she swore by her body and her soul (88), that if he ever went off like that again, she would find out how he did it and how he acquitted himself (92), and who it was who had smashed the shield from which he only brought home a fragment. Each evening when he returned, the lady pondered the situation (96), but did not say a word. And her husband would greet her upon his return, and he put his arms around her neck (100) and said, "My lady, by Saint Omer, you really should love and honor and esteem me, for there is no finer knight (104) than me between here and Normandy!" "Good sir, I do not dislike you; and I would like you even more with my whole heart, if I knew (108) that you truly were such as you have told me." "My lady," he said, "I am, and even better besides! I have even greater strength and bravery than I say, I believe (112)." At that they left the matter and the knight embraced his lady and kissed her five, even six times. Then they sat down to eat (116) the meal prepared for them, and after eating the beds were prepared and they went to sleep. When they had slept enough (120) and the sun was up high, the knight got up, dressed, put on his shoes and again called for his arms (124). When he was armed, fair and fine, he took leave of the lady. "My lady," he said, "I am going back to that wood in search of adventure (128). You should know that if I meet any man who dares joust with me, he won't be able to escape me. Either I'll take him prisoner, or he'll die (132)!" "My lord," she answered, "may it be so." So he mounted his horse and returned to the wood. And the lady, who was very wise (136), thought to herself that she would go after him, to know and to test out his bravery and knightly valor, without coming to any harm (140).

The lady quickly armed herself like a knight: she put on a hauberk, strapped a sword to her side, arming herself fully without delay (144), and then she laced her helmet on her head, mounted her horse and rode off. She did not stop but hastened until she came to the wood (148), and saw her husband who had dismounted and was slashing his shield to pieces, and was making such a noise that the whole wood resounded with it (152). He was paying no attention to anyone. And when the lady saw him, she was completely dumbfounded. As quickly as she could she cried out to him (156), "Sir, vassal, what are you up to in my wood and on my land, cutting up my wood like that

and why are you taking it out upon your shield (160) which has never done you any harm? Indeed, this is too bad! What is your quarrel with your shield? A curse on anyone who thinks well of you (164)! That shield doesn't understand anything, so I will defend it against you. You will have to joust with me; there is no escape (168) and there will be no delay." When he heard the lady, he had never been so troubled in his life. He immediately stopped what he was doing (172) and looked to see who was threatening him. He was so afraid that he did not know what to do, for he had no wish to fight. In his cowardly laziness he let his sword fall from his hand (176). And the lady turned towards him, drew her sword and attacked him; she dealt him such a blow on the helmet with the flat of her sword (180) that his head rang. When the knight felt this, he really thought he had been wounded and he fell to the ground in fear (184). He was unable to move and a small child could have pulled his eyes out of his head as from a wild animal (188). He did not dare contradict her. The lady then said to him, "Now, come, vassal, joust with me!" The knight cried "'Have mercy (192), sir, I will swear upon the saints that I will never come back into this wood, and I will never damage my shield again. Just let me get up onto my horse (196) and go!" "You will have to change your tune," she said, "before you escape from me. Now, hear what you will have to do (200): I am going to offer you a dare. You will have to die and your battle will be over. I will come down onto the ground (204) and I will bend over in front of you. You will have to kiss my ass—there is no other way out!" "Sir, I will do (208) what you command; now, come down to me." "Indeed I will" she replied. So she dismounted, went over to him, lifted her garment (212) and bent over in front of his face. And he saw a great crack from the cunt and the ass; it seemed to him that they were all one thing (216). Never, so God help him, he thought to himself, had he seen such a long ass! He leant towards it and kissed it. Now the woman who took him for a fool had well and truly dealt with him in her own way (220)! And he asked her her name, where she was from and from which land. "Vassal, why do you ask (224)?" she said. "You will not find such a name in all this country. I tell you truly (228), none of my family shares this name. I am called Long-Assed Bérenger, and I bring shame to all cowards!"

With that the lady mounted her horse (232) and went back to her house. She immediately sent for her lover to come and speak with her; and he came without delay (236). He gave her great joy, and she him. And they both went to bed to do what they desired. And the knight came back (240) from the wood and entered the house. And his household questioned him and asked how he had fared. "Indeed," he said, "All is very well with me (244)! I have rid all this land of those who were waging war against me, and I have defeated and killed them." Then he went into the chamber (248) and found his wife calmly enjoying the embrace and kisses of her lover; she did not deign to acknowledge him. So the knight began to scold (252) when he saw this—he was very angry and he threatened her fiercely: "My lady," he said, "you thought wrong when you thought you could sleep with another man (256)! You'll die for this, I tell you." And the lady replied, "Shut up! Take care not to speak of this anymore (260)!" she said to the scoundrel. "If I hear you mention it again, the very next day, without delay, I will go to Lord Bérenger (263) the Long Assed, who is very powerful. He will take vengeance on you for me." When the knight heard this, he was never more

surprised in his life (268). And now he knew that she knew all that had happened to him; and so he never did say any more about it. And the lady did all that she wanted (272), without the least concern for him. And so I forbid everyone who boasts about things which they cannot carry out (276), to give up their bragging. And I tell you truly that such boasting is folly. This is the end of my case. Here ends Berengier au long cul.]

Chapter 8

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Life on the Manor and in Rural Space: Answering the Challenges of Social Decay in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*

Written in multiple versions, perhaps over some 40 years, William Langland's *Piers Plowman* presents readers with one of the most unusual and multivalent characters in medieval English literature—the person from whom the poem takes its name.¹ Deeply influenced by an apocalyptic worldview that saw the end of human history looming on the horizon, *Piers Plowman* depicts a society from the king's court at Westminster to the “fair field full of folk” rooted in a dangerous usage of the environment that threatens the material and spiritual well being of the day.² Readers of the poem should be reminded that for this poet the material and spiritual aspects of life are directly connected, but that the poet's ideology for reading the events of his day is highly selective in the way that biblical scholars have noted was characteristic of the Deuteronomistic historians' reading of the history of Israel (i.e., sin brings punishment).

If the biblical writer saw all of history as connected with idolatry in the syncretistic practices of Israelite life instead of a more balanced focus that examines the political and economic interrelationship of Israel/Judah with nearby

¹ All quotations from *Piers Plowman* are from the B Text version. The translations are mine. See George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, ed. *Piers Plowman: The B Version: Piers Plowman: The Three Versions*, ed. George Kane (London and Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988). See also the comments on Langland's *Piers Plowman* by Albrecht Classen in the Introduction to the present volume.

² The notion that apocalyptic thought and form have influenced the poem is a commonplace, beginning with Morton Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961).

countries and the growing struggles for power of the Assyrian and Babylonian empire, William Langland saw human history through the prism of the Seven Deadly Sins. To illustrate one such opening made by scholars about the limited and subjective nature of Langland's vision, we need only cite one example here. In an analysis of Hunger's role in the poem, Robert Worth Frank has given readers of the poem a new prism based on agricultural knowledge of the fourteenth century. Langland was aware of the natural disasters of famine in his day and even has his central character Piers say that he will support others "but if the londe fall" (unless the land fails) (B. 6.17).³

If we read around the heavily almost Deuteronomistic reading of history which Langland also follows, we see a vision of the age which tells us much about the economics of the rural world of England, not its sins that bring on plague, disease, and famine. While we should be careful not to disregard the moral readings of history from Langland's perspective, we find a rich vision of economics, class, and social critique of the physical world of his day. At base we can say that Langland provides the readers of his day and today a vision of rural ethics—an ethics that he continues to rework throughout his poetic career and one that can bring about change in the social order through a kind of visionary gleam.

The implicit question which the poem asks is "Does the rural world have something to offer the late fourteenth century"? To that question Langland provides a tentative "yes" through his central character, Piers, a seemingly well-to-do peasant, given that he possesses his own plow and is able to marshal the means of production on the half acre.⁴ Through an examination of the plowing scenes in the *Visio* and the *Vita*, readers find a character whose virtues are rooted in the material and spiritual practices of a world that is passing away. Langland seems to present his character as a savior figure of the age—one who had gained popular recognition in a famous sermon by John Ball during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.⁵ At the same time, however, a poet whose literary production gave tacit support for revolt would have been the least likely person to support such an activity. In contrast, Langland seems to assert the social model of society deeply rooted in the

³ Robert Worth Frank, "The 'Hunger Gap,' Crop Failure, and Famine: The Fourteenth-Century Agricultural Crisis and *Piers Plowman*, in *Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice, and Representation*, ed. Dale Sweeney. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 227–43.

⁴ Werner Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans., Alexander Stützer (1985; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 107–13.

⁵ Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics 27 (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994), 102–39; Andrew Galloway, "Making History Legal: *Piers Plowman* and the Rebels of Fourteenth-Century England," *William Langland's Piers Plowman: A Book of Essays*, ed. Kathleen M. Hewett-Smith. Medieval Casebooks (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 7–39. See also the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor, who focuses on the legal side of the peasant uprisings.

conflicted world of feudalism. At the same time, however, he wants to build that model from the bottom up rather than from the top down. His community is one that must be based on will, however fallen or corrupted that will is. We should not be surprised then that the Dreamer in the poem is named "Will" and that the poem is in some sense an attempt to educate him to action.

By putting people back to work on the half acre that he holds in trust from Truth, Piers represents a return to the traditional social structures found in the rural world—in fact deeply imprinted in the very way the land looks—that was being compromised by the lingering effects of the Black Death, a number of bad harvests and periodic famine.⁶ Yet Piers is not a simple conservative in an age of a growing market-based economy of the manorial village, city or town. He is the voice of rural England. As the poem develops over Langland's career, Piers becomes more allusive, apparently because the challenges of the social order cannot be easily remedied or perhaps because Langland wanted to protect his vision from oversimplified readings that led to violence.

As F. R. H. Du Boulay astutely notes, Piers is a "guide, workman, overseer, contemplative, half-hidden preacher of love, Christ himself in human nature, and perhaps the angelic pope of medieval yearning."⁷ His multivalence is both a strength and problematic representation of possibilities. Working with his plow, engaging all the social estates on the half acre, and becoming frustrated with the failures of human nature bent toward greed and radical misuse of goods Piers becomes a stable entity against chaos. He becomes the only satisfactory answer to the social ills of the day.

The king's court and the parliament cannot provide that. Instead of the peaceful activities seen in such artistic pieces as projected in the *Book of Hours* of the Duke de Berry,⁸ Langland presents his readers with a social reformer straight from the manor who challenges the society of his day. The plowing of the half acre, a metaphor for a reformed England, represents an attempt to correct the declining social order. That it fails is less the fault of Langland's central character than it is a shift in the countryside that produced a late medieval society lingering on the brink of chaos as it was giving birth to the whispers of modernity, and a beginning movement away from the countryside into towns and cities.⁹

In order to understand Langland's rural ethics and its crystallization in Piers the Plowman himself, we first need to define what that rural ethics is along with the

⁶ Frank, "The Hunger Gap" (see note 3), 228–29.

⁷ F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The England of Piers Plowman: William Langland and His Vision of the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 112.

⁸ See the contributions to this volume by Albrecht Classen and Lia B. Ross.

⁹ For further discussions on the significance of urban space, see, for example, the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

underlying ideology of the peasant plowman and then to examine his role in the plowing of the half acre, his confrontation with a priest concerning his pardon, and the allegorical plowing scene in the *Vita*.

What is a rural ethics in *Piers Plowman*? The following qualities seem to represent the rural ethic as Piers himself understands them:

First, a rural ethics relies on the teachings that Conscience and Kind Wit provide—these are natural faculties in medieval faculty psychology. In essence, they are natural. They are the produce of a God-given wisdom and are written upon the mind by human experience.

Second, a rural ethics suggests that the performance of task requires flexibility according to various needs. Piers is able to fulfill many roles within the activity of economic and agricultural production.

Third, a rural ethics suggests a stable relationship between landlord and tenant whereby adequate wages are provided.

Fourth, a rural ethics suggests that truth exists as a transcendent reality of God's very self and that it exists in the form of an earthly, platonic manifestation in the traditional feudal structure that had been operational in society from approximately 1000 C.E.

Fifth, a rural ethics suggests that one can approach that Truth because it is also located in the human heart and because it motivates all actions.

There is little question that these rural ethics are idealistic. Many readers find in *Piers Plowman* an overall pessimism about human nature, but this image must be balanced with the notions of a coming apocalyptic king, a messianic figure, who will remove the wrong in the social order depicted in the speeches of Conscience at the king's courts in passus 4 of the B text.¹⁰ Piers himself exists somewhere between the messianic king and those rooted in conspicuous misuse of goods.

From the end of the Roman Empire in the West to the fourteenth century, a considerable change developed with respect to the understanding not only of the social order, but of the place of labor. As Jacques LeGoff has noted, according to a monastic model of understanding, labor was seen as a consequence of sin. We are very far removed from the idea of labor as one's lot in life assigned by the Creator and a means to praise that Creator.¹¹ In literature of the early and high Middle Ages, peasants were often depicted in the countryside as "pagans," and such images were reinforced in the writings of Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, and Sulpicius Severus.¹² Sometimes the peasant was depicted as little more than a "barely human monster."¹³ Others represented them as the embodiment of

¹⁰ For a most revealing treatment of this idea, see J. A. Burrow, "God the Fullness of Time in *Piers Plowman*," *Medium Aevum*, 79.2 (2010): 300–05.

¹¹ Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (1977; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 53–57, 71–97.

¹² Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 92–93.

¹³ Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 93.

lechery, drunkenness, leprosy, and venereal disease.¹⁴ Readers may find some of the depictions of the human body in the representation of the Seven Deadly Sins in passus 5 of the B text of *Piers* continuing this association. LeGoff also notes that the peasant was often associated with social rebellion and a breaking down of the social fabric of society.¹⁵ He concludes, "The peasant, then, has become an anonymous, nonindividualized creature who serves merely to set off the character of the military and cultivated elite, the main burden of the Church."¹⁶

If this voice had been the only one available to represent the peasantry by the late Middle Ages, *Piers the Plowman* would indeed have been as exemplary as he would have been rare. Scholars are not clear about whether Langland invented *Piers* or simply included one of society's contemporary mythic figures.¹⁷ Whoever he is, he is above the typical representation of the peasant. The images of Waster, Glutton, and others, however, do continue that almost animalistic representation of humanity, typically seen in terms of its conspicuous consumption—one that undermines the stability of the order. It may well be the case too that the differences in the representation of peasant culture may result from the growing economic variability within peasant communities that Barbara Hanawalt sees occurring after the Black Death. Some peasants, as we can determine from their wills, were almost upwardly mobile while others fell to even greater states of poverty.¹⁸

In his study of the background of the plowman in the fourteenth-century Wakefield *Mactacio Abel*, James H. Morey, however, has uncovered a more positive voice within the discourses on peasants in the late Middle Ages.¹⁹ Drawing on the "guarantee of sanctuary" for plowman in canon two of the Council of Rouen (1096), and favorable connections of the plow, temple, and city in the writings of Robert Manning of Brunne, Ranulf Higden, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, Morey suggests that for the late Middle Ages, the plowman was an important figure of authority. His status in the society was not only valued, but also protected.²⁰ What does seem clear then is that while the early medieval voice about peasantry certainly was governed by an elitist view of society, a space was found to value the

¹⁴ Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 93.

¹⁵ Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 89–97.

¹⁶ Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 97.

¹⁷ Boulay, *The England of Piers Plowman* (see note 7), 113–14. See also Elizabeth D. Kirk, "Langland's Plowman and the Recreation of Fourteenth-Century Religious Metaphor," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988): 1–21.

¹⁸ Barbara Hanawalt, *The Tie That Binds: Peasant Communities in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1886), 45–63.

¹⁹ James H. Morey, "Plows, Laws, and Sanctuary in Medieval England and in the Wakefield *Mactacio Abel*," *Studies in Philology* 95.1 (1998): 41–55.

²⁰ Morey, "Plows, Laws, and Sanctuary in Medieval England" (see note 19), 45–48.

work of plowmen as separate from their peasant counterparts.²¹ Morey suggests that the biblical references to plowing may lie behind a more positive attitude toward plowmen, and another scholar has noted that the plow itself is often a metaphor for the pulpit, thus connecting the two images of peasant and cleric together in the person of Piers.²² Without question, in passus 21 of the B text, the first expanded version of Langland's vision of the world, Piers has become the first Pope, St. Peter himself, who is plowing with the four oxen representing the gospels and harrowing the new crop with the Church Fathers. That later Piers, however, is a transformed vision of his predecessor who labors on the half acre to establish justice and truth.

II

From the opening of the poem in the Prologue with the fair field of folk—the scene of a manorial village whose overlord is Truth—the poet represents the rural world in some sense of flux. With the plowing of the half acre scene in passus 6 of the B text, the poet presents readers with the failure of the ecclesiastically driven tripartite model of society that was a part of feudal empire building. Following on from the sermon of Reason that suggests the pilgrims should seek St. Truth, Piers is the only person who has ever heard of such a saint or knows anything about following him. He suggests he has served Truth for 40 years and that “I haue myn hire [of hym] wel and ouperwhiles moore” (I have my pay from him well and sometimes even more) (B. 5.550).

Margaret Goldsmith, working from an exegetical perspective, suggests that Piers is here rooted in an Old Testament system of justice and payment, but it may actually be the case that Piers sees Truth merely providing payment for work as a product of a just society.²³ What it does suggest is that in serving for 40 years—a typical term in the Hebrew Bible for a long period of time—Piers understands his world well. While he knows the way to Truth, in no way will that mean he can forsake his work on the half acre. What the pilgrims seem to be unaware of is that the work on the half acre *is* the pilgrimage.

²¹ See also the figure of the Plowman in Johannes von Tepl *Der Ackermann*, as discussed by Albrecht Classen in his Introduction to this volume. He also refers us to the positive figure of the old and wealthy farmer Helmbrecht in Wernher der Gartenære's eponymous didactic verse narrative, whose son, named after him, breaks out of his old society and turns into a vicious robber knight who is, at the end, lynched by the previously victimized farmers.

²² Stephen Barney, “The Plowshare of the Tongue: The Progress of a Symbol from the Bible to *Piers Plowman*,” *Medieval Studies* 35 (1973): 261–93.

²³ Margaret Goldsmith, *The Figure of Piers Plowman: The Image on the Coin* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1981), 43.

Pier's rural ethic is contained in his opening announcement:

"I haue an half acre to erie by þe hei₃e weye;
 Hadde I erylid þis half acre and sowen it after
 I wolde wende wiþ yow and þe wey teche."
 "This were a long lettyng," quod a lady in a Scleyre.
 "What sholde we women werche þe while?
 "Somme shul sowe þe sak for shedying of þe Whete.
 And ye louely ladies wiþ youre longe fyngres,
 That ye haue silk and Sandel to sowe whan tyme is
 Chesibles for Chapeleyns churches to honoure.
 Wyues and widewes wolde and flex spynneþ'
 Makeþ cloþ, I counseille you, and kenneþ so youre dou₃tres.
 The nedy and þe naked nymeþ hede how þei liggeþ
 Casteþ hem cloþes [for cold] for so [wol] truþe.
 For I shal lened hem liflode but if þe lond faille
 As longe as I lyue, for þe lordes loue of heuene.
 And all manere of men þat [by þe] mete libbeþ,
 Helpeþ hym werche wi₃tlliche þat wyneþ youre foode."

(B.6.4–20)

["I have a half acre to plow by the highway;
 If I had plowed the half acre and had snow it afterwards
 I would go with you and teach you the way."
 "That would be a long delay," said the lady in a veil.
 What should we women do in the meantime?"
 "Some should sow the sacks for shedding of the wheat.
 And you lovely ladies with your long fingers,
 That you have silk and fine linen to sew when you have time
 Chasubles for priests to honor the Church.
 Wives and widows should spin flax and wool;
 I counsel you to make cloth and teach your daughters also.
 The needy and the naked, take notice how their live;
 Make them clothes against the cold, so for truth teaches.
 For I shall work for them both unless the land fails
 As long as I live, for the Lord of heaven's love.
 And all manner of men that by the meat live
 Help them work rightly that bring your food."]

A number of important points surface in this first reorganization of work. In Piers's half acre, all social classes must work together, with the effect of an idealized society. As James Simpson has observed, "The whole foundation of this true society is itself part of a penitential act, a pilgrimage to seek St. Truthe."²⁴

²⁴ The effort described is one based on an optimistic view of humanity, a vision that the poem in no

Further he notes that “full spirituality of the kind that Langland is committed to can be realized only through ‘true’ social relationships of interdependent labour.”²⁵

Women of the peasant classes do what medieval art always depicts them as doing—spinning wool. Thus they are providing clothing, a part of the feudal enterprise for women, almost a cottage industry. The “loueliche ladies” (6.18), since they are socially above the others, will embroider ecclesiastical garments as they have done since the Anglo-Saxon period.²⁶ What seems implicit here is that the teaching that he promises has already begun. That he would be able to marshal peasant women should not be a surprise, but that he is also able to engage noble women is one of the poem’s unexplained mysteries. He does, however, speak to them courteously! Piers will work for all of them, unless there is crop failure. The first aspects of reality have now made their way onto the half acre. In a sense, it provides a foreboding of potential disaster that may be accounted for as the scene develops through another ideological lens.

Since cooperation of the willful variety seems to characterize activity in this microcosm of the medieval world, the knight steps forward to offer his services. The exchange here also merits our attention, as someone who is Piers’s social better seems to be beholden to Piers. The knight says,

“By crist!” . . . “[pɔw] kenne[st] vs þe beste,
 Ac on þe teme tau₃t was I neuere.
 [Ac] kenne me,” quod þe kny₃t, “and [I wold konne erie].”
 “By Seint Poull,” quod Perkyn, “[for þow profrest þee so lowe]
 I shal swynke and swete and sowe for vs bothe,
 And [ek] labour[e] for þi loue al my lif tyme,
 In couenaunt þat þow kepe holy kirke and myselue
 From wastours and wikked men þat [wolde me destuye],
 And go hunte hardiliche to hards and to foxes,
 To bores and to [bukkes] þat breken myne hegges,
 And [fette þe hoom] faucons foweles to kille
 For [pise] comeþ to my croft and cropheþ my whete.”
(B. 6. 21–32)

[By Christ, you teach us what is best to do,
 But I was never taught on a team.
 By St. Paul, said Piers, “since you offer help so humbly
 I shall work and sweat and for both of us

way seems to support. It is possible that the poet may be setting up a challenge that can only fail, a kind of mirror of the events of the post-Plague period along economic and social lines. Cf. James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*, revised ed. (1990; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 63.

²⁵ Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction* (see note 24), 64.

²⁶ J. A. W. Bennett, ed., *Piers Plowman: The Prologue and Passus I–VIII of the B Text* (New York and Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 198–99.

And also labor for your love all my lifetime
 In covenant that you will keep Holy Church and me
 From wasters and wikked men that would destroy me,
 And go hunt hardily hares and foxes
 Bores and bucks that break down my hedges,
 And have for yourself falcons to kills birds
 That come to my croft and crop my wheat.]

What is interesting at first observation is that the knight seems to think that Piers will require that he also become an agricultural laborer. That the knight first suggests that he needs instruction in plowing hints that the social contract is no longer stable as it might have been in pre-plague England. The historical reality, of course, is that labor was at a premium, and the Statutes of Laborers was passed in 1351 to put wages for laborers back at pre-Plague levels.²⁷

It is hard to imagine, however, that any noble person would have ever considered the possibility of plowing! Hunting, a chief occupation of the noble classes both in reality and in literary texts such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, is turned to helpful ends that underscore the legitimacy of the activity. Hunting will control the threat of animals who challenge the economic viability of the half acre. What also seems intriguing is that the knight represents the only legal representative in this constructed world. In addition, the knight is to be honest and should deal honorably with his tenants. Yet it is the last of these areas—the contact between nobility and peasants—that will bring about the death of the half acre as a model for understanding stable and idealized community. Were the relationships between landlords and tenants strained? This seems hardly a rhetorical question.

By the fourteenth century, there was considerable change in the traditional relationships between lords and their tenants. That Piers has to warn the knight about the treatment of tenants is a not-too-subtle reference to what must have been an economic reality as manorialism declined further. Georges Duby writes that

The same fortuitous crises which in the fourteenth century struck the manorial estates with such force that they were shaken to their very foundations did not spare the households of the poor. These households had in the first place to suffer the repeated attempts of the masters to deal with financial difficulties by squeezing the last drop from manorial rights, and by constantly scaling up their demands on dependents. The latter could not always resist, and indeed ransoms were often paid, and burnt manors and devastated fields repaired, out of peasant savings.²⁸

²⁷ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion* (see note 5), 37, 175.

²⁸ Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 332–33. See also Gregory M. Sadlek, *Idleness Working: The Discourse of Love's Labor from Ovid Through Chaucer and Gower* (Washington, DC: The

With this backdrop, then, we can certainly ask several pertinent questions. Is there a reason then that the knight responds “Curteisly” (B.6.33) to Piers?

Is there some reason why Piers seems to have the upper hand in this meeting? Is the knight simply trying to protect his interests in a rapidly changing economic and social landscape? We may hazard a tentative “yes” to all of these questions. A gracious response is a recognition that social change has come to late fourteenth-century England, a change that has placed peasants, particularly well-to-do peasants, in positions of power. If Piers is willing to reassert the older model of social organization even if he seems himself to have moved beyond it, then it is clearly in the knight’s best interest to follow in the path which Piers suggests. He will still maintain the outward look of social superiority, even if the current circumstances suggest that the world has changed in ways that will never allow it to be the same again.

Langland, however, through Piers is troubled with that kind of change, hence the entire reason for the half acre scene. While David Aers asserts that Langland affirms the “dominant social model,”²⁹ at the same time that traditional model seems under siege at least from the poet’s perspective as he tends to scorn a free-lance labor that post-Plague England came to see as normative. This ending of feudalism was not on the Langlandian radar.

With his idealized social model of rural space in place, Piers readies himself for pilgrimage by accepting garments whose meaning is governed by the poem’s sartorial code system. Announcing that he will dress in “pilgrim[ys] wyse” (B.6.52), he alters the traditional pilgrim’s garb to that of a sower. Thus the change suggests that pilgrimage and plowing are the same—perhaps what J. A. Burrow refers to as a “substitutionary pilgrimage.”³⁰ Given the condemnation of pilgrimage activity in the poem’s prologue, equating it with lying and lascivious behavior, it would be surprising if indeed Piers actually did become a professional pilgrim who would lead the pilgrims. Yet at the same time, the wardrobe change is also indicative of one of the Church’s sanctioned institutions for spiritual healing and renewal. Piers is clearly redrawing the parameters of action here just as he is reordering a society based on the concept of will.

After making his will in the traditional manner of the “middle class” and nobility, Piers begins his work. As Piers plows the half acre, others join in the effort, and he wants to survey his work to determine the workers he will hire at harvest time—note the deferral in time of the departure for pilgrimage already.

Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 185–86.

²⁹ David Aers, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360–1430* (London: Routledge, 1988), 35.

³⁰ J. A. Burrow, “Words, Work and Will: Theme and Structure in *Piers Plowman*,” *Piers Plowman: Critical Approaches*, ed. S. S. Hussey (London: Methuen, 1969), 111–24.

Harmony, however, is quickly destroyed by the wasters, even as early as 9:00 a.m. What seems most interesting here is that those who sing “hey trolly lolly” (B.6.108) are an undifferentiated lot of peasants. While they are not described in animalistic terms as would have been typical in early medieval texts, here they are noted as “faking” various kinds of bodily ailments that would prohibit them from working.

Aers contends that “Langland’s construction of wasters is thus an ideological and partisan class term,” given that his warning, reminiscent of the language in the 1351 *Statute of Labourers* seems to embody the very idiom of the legal text,³¹ Piers becomes the voice of what post-colonial critics would call the “colonial dominant ideology” that intends to force onto the colonized laborer a set of values that are at best arbitrary and at worst ones that do not respond to the requirements of a growing market economy of supply and demand.

The idle workers, however, do not seem intimidated by any threat; in fact, they have developed strategies to mimic the oppression, almost in the sense that Homi Bhabha suggests is true of postcolonial mimicry of colonial intentions.³² One even offers to fight Piers. Amidst the depersonalized group is one called “A Bretoner, a bragger, [he b]osted Piers als / And bad hym go pissen with his plow” (B.6.154–55). If the plow is a sanctuary as Morey suggests, then clearly this Breton braggart is violating a cultural and legal norm. Knowing that his venture is now in difficulty, Piers asks the knight for help in bringing order to the laboring peasants. But even the knight, the most palpable representative of power—at least in pre-Plague England—is unable to return the workers to their labor. Can rural space accept such an intrusion of abusive and recalcitrant peasant power?

Even the knight’s “Or þow shalt abigge by þe lawe, by þe ordre þat I bere” (Else you shall abide by the law by the rank that I hold) (B.6.166) seems futile. Waster simply refuses to work. All of the idealism which went into Piers’s futile attempt just as the firm legislation of 1351 dealing with wasters and laborers who saw free market possibilities for their work proves ineffectual. Piers has another weapon, but its use is ambiguous to the plot of the poem, and even its identification remains in question in critical studies.

Only Hunger seems to be effective in getting the wasters to become productive, but only again with momentary results. They work as if their very lives depended on it! Attempts to repair the problem have thus revealed the weakness in the colonial and feudal model which was under attack during the reign of Richard II, particularly seen in the Rebels’ cry at Miles End.³³ While legislation is intended to stop the decentering of rural space, Langland’s poem in all of its versions shows that the same force is at work at the deepest level of social contract. Langland, it

³¹ Aers, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity* (see note 29), 40.

³² Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 121–31.

³³ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion* (see note 5), 102–39.

would seem, supports the continuance of the older forms of social organization on the manor, but early readers of the poem, particularly of the B text, did not think so.³⁴ It may be possible to discover Langland's growing ambivalence. That Langland's revisions of the poem after the Peasants' Revolt produced a less confrontational *Piers* suggests the poet's own awareness of a postcolonial decentered world that even the flow of his own text seems to legitimate. A new community in rural space was yet to be born. What is still possible?

The role of Hunger in Passus 6 demands further attention from readers, particularly because Langland represents it through his Deuteronomistic understanding of history and natural events (e.g., sin brings punishment). Hunger is called in by Piers to "Awreke me of wastours" (Avenge me of wasters) (B.6.173). Piers's strategy through Hunger works, at least momentarily. Peasants whose very bodies show starvation rather than slacking off from work litter the scene. Hunger itself must be fed before it will leave. The sequence ends with the intrusion of the authorial voice with a kind of somber apocalyptic prediction:

Ac I warne yow workmen, wynneþ while ye mowe
 For hunger hiderward hasten hym faste.
 He shal awake [porou] water wastours to chaste;
 Er five [yet] be fulfilled swich famyn shal aryse.
 Thorou₃ fle[od] and foul wedres frytes shall faille,
 And so sei[b] Saturne and sente yow warne.
 Whan ye se þe [mone] amys and two monkes heddes,
 And a mayde haue þe maistrie, and multiplie by ei₃te,
 Thanne shal deef wiþdrawe, and derþe be Iustice,
 And Dawe þe dykere deye for hunger
 But [if] god of his goodnesse graunte vs a trewe.

(B.6.321–31)

[But I warn you workmen, gain a living while you may
 For hunger is coming quickly.
 He has awoken by water wasters to chastise,
 Before five years are fulfilled such famine shall arise
 Through flooding and foul weather fruits shall fail,
 And so says Saturn and sends you warning.
 When you see the moon amiss and two monks heads,
 And a maiden have the mastery, and multiply by eights,
 Then shall death withdraw and Dearth by justice,
 And Daw the diker die for hunger
 Unless God of his goodness grant us a truce.]

³⁴ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion* (see note 5), 102–39.

The language sounds reminiscent of apocalyptic texts from the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and from the book of Revelation, all of which are deeply rooted in the Deuteronomic vision that human failure brings judgment from God—a God who can also stop that same judgment. At the same time, we can look beyond the rhetorical flourishes to this apocalyptic text in *Piers* and see a more prevalent aspect of agricultural reality. Fears of famine were widespread. Within the cultural memory of the poem's readers was a series of famines between 1315 and 1321 as well as the 1350s and 1360s, where many died in an almost apocalyptic manner.³⁵ At the same time, within the production cycle each year, Frank has noted that medieval agricultural practices created their own scarcity each summer—what he calls the “hunger gap”—between the time that grains from the previous harvest ran out and the new crops are still in the field awaiting harvest.³⁶ A very poor quality of bread made of beans was typically consumed in this period, and “Such course fair is the alternative to languishing or dying from hunger that *Piers* offers the able-bodied.”³⁷ The events seem then caught in natural cycles which were interpreted along spiritual lines—almost a part of Langland's rural ethics.

III

Passus 7 of the B text opens with the interrelated events of Truth's granting a pardon to *Piers* and his heirs forever and Truth's mandate to *Piers* to continue his plowing. It is the confrontation toward the end of the passus between *Piers* and a priest, perhaps his own parish priest from his village. Given that Langland softens the exchange between *Piers* and the priest in the C text, removing *Piers*'s response on pure anger against the priest, we should read the version found in both the A and B texts carefully as they reveal the earliest thinking about the event. We can see a change in the role of *Piers* in this interpretive moment as he begins to take away from the authority figure his own ability to read texts, namely the very words of his pardon from *Piers*.

The priest announces, “*Piers* . . . ‘*þi* pardon moste I rede, ‘For I [shal] construe ech clause and keen it þee on englisch” (B.7.107–08). Unfortunately this parish priest does not recognize it as a pardon: “I kan no pardon fynde” (B.7.115). This priest may not only have “lost touch with Christian idealism,” but he also has given a literal reading—a carnal reading.³⁸ He exchanges Latin for English words.

³⁵ Frank, “The Hunger Gap” (see note 3), 227–43.

³⁶ Frank, “The Hunger Gap” (see note 3), 229–31.

³⁷ Frank, “The Hunger Gap” (see note 3), 229.

³⁸ Donald Howard, *The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World* (Princeton: Princeton

Piers's reaction, one of the most significant gestures in both the A and B texts, is a reaction against such readings. Piers wants to show that his pardon functions symbolically. To initiate his symbolic reading as the only valid interpretation of the pardon Piers cites a passage of scripture and then assigns new significance. Psalm 22:4 (23:4), "If I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil because you are with me" (B.7.113–14), seems to make little literal sense in this context. In the poem, rather than using English, Piers quotes the text from the Latin Vulgate.

In the post-colonial context of something "almost always already existing," Piers uses the tradition of reading scripture symbolically to defeat someone—a representative of holy church—an experience so profound that even the priest himself concludes that Piers must be a cleric! In the confrontation, we see part of the developing polemic of rural space to answer back to the power structures of Langland's day. Piers has merely become the mimic of a form here, acting as a clerical interpreter, but at the same time, it has provided him with the kind of liberating experience which suggests his earlier pursuits have been in vain. He will become another kind of pilgrim—one whose search from community and wholeness begin not externally, but internally. In a sense, Langland has allowed his central character, Piers, to fall victim to the poem's social ethic which values the internal over the external. After all, Truth resides within the human heart. Somewhere on the half acre, Piers seems to have forgotten that amidst the struggle to plow the field, harvest the crop, and thresh the grain. The *Visio* seems to show the failures of rural space to provide answers to the social problems of the day, but it may be that we should read some of the minor voices here that do support community. The women and the knight respond in obedience and create a community; the males of the lower peasant class seem to be those that attempt to tear it down.

IV

Scenes of rural space dot the landscape so to speak through the *Vita*, the second part of the poem, but it is particularly another plowing scene that interests us as we probe the meaning of rural space. If the world of rural space through Langland's Deuteronomic vision of the reality becomes radically corrupted because human greed is left unchecked, then a corrective plowing might set things right. Running through *heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) from the time of Abraham

University Press, 1966), 177; A. V. C. Schmidt, *The Clerkly Maker: Langland's Poetic Art* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 86.

and Moses through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, Langland presents a vision of the founding of the Church on Pentecost and has Piers again to serve as a plowman. In a sequence in Passus 19 of the B text that is clearly intended to identify the fourteenth-century plowman with the first-century apostle Peter, Piers is given four oxen, the evangelists, to plow the earth. The Church Fathers will serve as the "harrow" to be used later to introduce scriptural interpretation. Piers then sows the cardinal virtues among his new field. The Church itself that is founded is Piers's barn, into which the crops will be gathered against the coming onslaught. Here again, Piers is attacked by Pride (B.19. 335–37). Using a series of attacks, Piers and his band are able to save Unity Holy Church. As with the first plowing scene, some begin to doubt Piers, so that the attacks come from without and within. The noble vision of the spiritual community built in rural space wavers on the brink of disaster.

After the sacrament of penance has been corrupted by the friars, Conscience decides to leave the Church in search of Piers who will rebuke Pride and repair the actions of the friars. Exactly what Langland intended with this conclusion has been a matter of scholarly debate throughout the history of Piers scholarship. What does seem clear is that Piers still holds the answer, this multivalent and allusive figure of leadership. Given that Piers is not a representative of the court, but likely a somewhat well-to-do peasant in post-Plague England, Langland retains Piers as the shaper of social space. He seems to be the only one to do it.

Barring the interpretation that "in reality the unity envisioned in theocratic theory has been destroyed in every aspect" with the lack of will manifested by all present,³⁹ and that the poem does little more than fall apart, several interpretations related to colonial/postcolonial visions of rural space should be considered. In one of his early studies of the poem, Aers's contention that Conscience's departure from Unity signals his rejection of orthodoxy seems rather hasty.⁴⁰ After all, the dreamer, Will, enters Unity in order to learn how to love. In a later article, Aers, reversing his earlier position, now sees Langland holding a qualified "yes" position about the possibility for the Church continuing, for a "no" answer would put Langland in the camp of Wyclif.⁴¹ He notes "For Langland, the Church has become an eschatological community that is acting in many ways as an impediment to its members' recognition of their eschatological salvation."⁴²

³⁹ David Mills, "The Role of the Dreamer in *Piers Plowman*," *Piers Plowman: Critical Studies*, ed. S. S. Hussey (London: Methuen, 1969), 183.

⁴⁰ David Aers, *Chaucer, Langland, and the Creative Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 78–79.

⁴¹ David Aers, "Visionary Eschatology: *Piers Plowman*," *Modern Theology* 16.1 (2000): 3–17.

⁴² Aers, "Visionary Eschatology" (see note 41), 12.

Still Langland does not reject the institutional church, and by the end of his poetic enterprise, he is no longer the angry plowman who confronts the priest at the reading of the pardon. He is no longer staging a revolt that will answer back.

What can then be said about rural space for Langland? Given that Langland cannot alter the social realities of change that were at work after the Black Death, Piers seems to provide the only answer. What does seem clear, however, is that while Piers represents the last great hope, in the course of the poem Langland has engaged in activities that mimic social oppression that were a part of post-Plague England. No wonder there is such ambivalence then at the root of the poem's central events. Mimicry breeds ambivalence even at the site of its articulation. In Piers, Langland brings together the ideal and the real in ways that speak to the challenges of his day. Still there is a gleam to the world of rural space that suggests it can answer back to society's deepest needs.

Chapter 9

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Landscape of Luxuries: Mahaut d'Artois's (1302–1329) Management and Use of the Park at Hesdin

Guillaume de Machaut (ca. 1300–1377) wrote of the park at Hesdin in his most famous poem, the *Remède de Fortune*: “I could never describe the marvels, the delights, the artifices, the automata, the watercourses, the entertainments, the wondrous things that were enclosed within.”¹ The park at Hesdin, whose proper name was just “li parc,” or “the park,” was located in northeastern France in the county of Artois. It was enclosed in 1295 by the order of Robert II, Count of Artois (1250–1302), and contained numerous gardens, aviaries, fishponds, quarries, rabbit warrens, stables, and fields in addition to the whimsical elements memorialized by Machaut.² However, it is Hesdin’s marvels—the whimsical automata, curious water-spouting devices, and a fun house on the water—that have drawn nobles, artists, and scholars alike since the park’s inception.³

Scholars (and not just Hesdin scholars) have focused almost exclusively on the park’s playful marvels to the exclusion of the park’s many other attributes, often utilizing the park as evidence of a unique style of European courtly romance.⁴ Until the publication in 1950 of Marguerite Charageat’s seminal article, “Le parc

¹ Guillaume de Machaut, *Le Jugement du Roy de Behaigne and Remède de Fortune*, ed. and trans. James I. Wimsatt and William W. Kibler. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 212–13.

² Archives Départementales Pas-de-Calais (ADPdc), Arras, France. Mss. A143.

³ Anne Hagopian Van Buren, “Reality and Literary Romance in the Park of Hesdin,” *Medieval Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth Blair MacDougall. Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, 9 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986), 115–34.

⁴ E.g., V. A. Kolve, *Telling Images* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 183–88; and Lynn White, Jr. *Medieval Technology and Social Change*. Sec. ed. (1971; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 125.

d'Hesdin, création monumentale du XIII^e siècle," which definitively proved that Robert II, not Philip the Bold (r. 1363–1404), was the progenitor of Hesdin, scholars commonly associated Hesdin with the Burgundian court and their notable penchant for playfulness and ingenuity.⁵

Since Charageat, the distinctive aesthetic of the park at Hesdin has continued to fascinate scholars to the exclusion of the park's other elements, particularly those concerning alimentation and economic benefit.⁶ The scholarly concentration on Hesdin's marvels altered, even if unintentionally, the representation of the park and its uses by suggesting that it was entirely ornamental.⁷ The heavy focus on the aesthetic elements of the park at Hesdin is not unusual. For the last half century, determining the purpose of the elite park—was it fiscally productive and practical, for pleasure, for power, or some combination thereof?—has dominated and shaped the study of landscape in medieval Europe. In seeking to answer this question, scholars unintentionally privileged either the productive or the aesthetic elements of elite landscapes, but never considered both simultaneously, often directed by the foci and conventions of the scholars' disciplines.⁸

A notable exception to this is John H. Harvey, who argued in *Mediaeval Gardens* that the utilitarian and the aesthetic purposes were co-equal in the medieval elite landscape.⁹ More recently, British archaeologists and historians, such as Oliver Creighton and Amanda Richardson, have successfully started to challenge the dominant aesthetic-practical paradigm and illuminate important interconnections

⁵ Marguerite Charageat, "Le parc d'Hesdin, création monumentale du XIII^e siècle," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de l'art français* (1950): 94–106. Chargeat further argues that Islamic architecture, technology, and the now-lost gardens at Palermo inspired Robert II's designers, an assertion with which Hagopian Van Buren (see note 3) disagreed.

⁶ For example, in French studies: Hagopian Van Buren, "Reality and Literary Romance" (see note 3), 115–34. In British studies: Oliver Creighton, an historian-archaeologist, mentions Hesdin briefly as an influential model on British estates after the visit of King Edward II in 1313 and an example of the "Little Park" in his recent comprehensive British landscape study: Oliver H. Creighton, *Designs Upon the Land: Elite Landscapes of the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Hampshire, and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2009).

⁷ This division occurs outside of northern Europe in both the Islamic and Christian Iberian case as well. Expiración García Sánchez, "Utility and Aesthetics in the Gardens of al-Andalus: Species with Multiple Uses," *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (Woodbridge, Hampshire, and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2008), 205–27.

⁸ For example, even though the explicit goal of Grenville Astill and Annie Grant's 1988 volume, *The Countryside of Medieval England*, was to present an interdisciplinary view of the countryside, the articles, such as Paul Stamper's "Woods and Parks," reflect this division with his heavily "utilitarian" example of the elite control of woodland and Annie Grant's argument in "Animal Resources" that animals were not used exclusively for food: Paul Stamper, "Woods and Parks," *The Countryside of Medieval England*, ed. Grenville Astill and Annie Grant (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988): 128–48; and Annie Grant, "Animal Resources," *The Countryside of Medieval England*, 149–87.

⁹ John Harvey, *Mediaeval Gardens* (London: Batsford, 1981).

in natural resources management and demonstrations of elite power and identity on elite estates and parks in medieval England. Similarly, French archaeologist François Duceppe-Lamarre has applied this *in toto* approach to analyzing the complex human-environmental relationships of animal husbandry, particularly that of deer, on elite landscapes in fourteenth-century Artois with like success.¹⁰

Focusing exclusively on Hesdin's aesthetic elements masks the importance of the park's land management not only for comital economic solvency and the sustainability of the natural resources, but also for the role of landscape and production of luxury goods in the larger process of self-fashioning aristocratic identity. The unusually rich and detailed Artesian account books of Robert II and his daughter, Countess Mahaut of Artois (1302–1329), which enumerate daily, *bailliage*, and works expenses, make it possible to execute a detailed economic and landscape study of the count's and countess's income and natural resources and luxury goods consumption. The accounts provide significant information about the management of—and relationship with—the wider social and physical environment. For example, a seemingly run-of-the-mill expense for the purchase of salt under Countess Mahaut also informs us of its intended use: it was purchased to salt “the venison that le Chat [one of Mahaut's hunters] caught at Hesdin.”¹¹ Such specificity confirms that Mahaut exploited Hesdin's lands for venison and can contribute to a calculation of the cost of salting at the park. Further, a close reading and statistical analysis of the accounts elucidates the mechanisms of the park's land management and can answer several questions about Hesdin and landscape studies in general: How was elite land used? Was it intentionally managed for household use and profit? How might those uses reflect aristocratic purpose and/or environmental resources?

Mahaut's account books demonstrate that many of Hesdin's elements were simultaneously practical, aesthetically pleasing, and symbolic of the countess's power. Her household demonstrated a marked preference for local natural resources, such as firewood. Mahaut also managed Hesdin to produce rare, highly sought-after, and generally expensive fresh foods, such as the luxuries, venison and fish. In addition, the park's ostentatious displays of wealth, such as the oft-mentioned fur-covered automata and control over natural resources manifest in the park's walls and carefully nurtured deer population, bolstered the countess's perceived power and authority. Mahaut's Hesdin provided her with not only raw natural resources, such as wood and grain, but also with luxury goods and a venue

¹⁰ François Duceppe-Lamarre. *Chasse et pâturage dans les forêts du Nord de la France: pour une archéologie du paysage sylvestre (XIe–XVIe siècles)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006).

¹¹ *Le compte général du receveur d'Artois pour 1303–1304: édition précédée d'une introduction à l'étude des institutions financières de l'Artois aux XIIIe–XIVe siècles*, ed. Bernard Delmaire (Brussels: Palais des Academies, 1977), 23, no. 375.

to demonstrate actively her elite status through hunting and entertaining (see the excellent article by Marilyn L. Sandidge for more on rural, space, royal hunting, and status in this volume).¹² The countess's accounts concerning Hesdin confirm that aristocratic parks were not uni-purpose, either ornamental or practical. Rather, Mahaut, like English elites, managed her landscape to maximize their natural resource production as well as their impact on the viewer. Elite designed landscapes, which cordoned off large amounts of resource-rich terrain, demonstrated elite power and wealth through their very existence, design, and use.

For this article, I have chosen to focus on a selection of wood, water, and plant harvesting examples from the park to demonstrate the important relationships between land management and aristocratic identity. I will also provide some evidence from two other *bailliages* under the countess's control for comparison of Hesdin's relative productivity: Aire on the Flemish border and Tournehem in the wooded north. Further, I have limited the study to 1302 to 1310, well before the devastating environmental effects of the Great Famine in 1314, which changed land management practices.

The bulk of the evidence about Mahaut's landscape management derives from the *bailliage* and general receiver accounts. Both *bailliage* and general accounts record incomes and expenditures three times a year starting on All Saints, Candlemas and Ascension. They record income in kind and in coin; the receipt of both wheat and oat, and in some cases coin from wood, rabbits, or watercress; and "*espuis*," or judicial income. Expenditures comprise a multitude of outlays: wages for various manual and skilled laborers, such as hunters and handymen; material costs for park repair; costs to repair nets and boats; and costs to purchase food for the deer, peacocks, beavers, and hunting dogs. As I argue that we can learn as much, if not more, from the descriptive entries in the accounts rather than their amounts, I focus primarily in this paper on the language of the entries, though I have provided some proportional cost analysis to help demonstrate the park at Hesdin's relative importance in the county.

I have classified the account entries into three rough categories: wood, water, and land. These categories are loosely defined to accommodate as many entries as possible; thus, the heuristic wood category contains entries on wood rents, wood sales, wages for wood sergeants, and wood bought, harvested, and carted for rebuilding. The sections on water include expenses and incomes concerning the renting of waters, mills, and fishing rights, entries concerning water grasses and watercress, fishing boats, waterfowl, and guards. The land sections will contain

¹² Hagopian Van Buren, "Reality and Literary Romance" (see note 3), 123 and fig. 3.

entries concerning the cutting, sale, and storage of land grass and associated expenses, and the purchase, maintenance, and/or sale of animals. Assuming a generally equal amount of incompleteness across the accounts and entries, it is possible to estimate roughly the importance of various natural resources to Mahaut's wider management plan.

The Park at Hesdin

The *bailliage* of Hesdin was expansive; it included several smaller holdings in addition to the park and its associated village from which the countess drew rents. Hesdin's centerpiece is the eponymous park of Hesdin, which was one of the largest enclosed parks in fourteenth-century northern Europe, comprising around 2,200 enclosed acres with additional unbounded forest. The ecology of this *bailliage* was primarily sylvan, rather than agricultural, and includes several large, managed wooded areas outside of the forest of the "emparked" (meaning delimited by walls rather than a free woodland) Hesdin proper.¹³ The park of Hesdin was highly productive and contained ponds, fields, woods (both for hunting and for timber), and a rabbit warren. Duceppe-Lamarre characterizes this mix of elements, and in particular the spatial construction of Hesdin, as a "*trilogie cynégétique*," or "hunting trilogy," because it combines an enclosed hunting park, a rabbit warren, and a large wooded area.¹⁴ Hesdin generates more income than either Tournehem or Aire (although it also incurs significantly more costs, as well). The average rent income is nearly 1,000 *livres per annum* at Hesdin with the total income (including sale of wood, grains, grass, etc.) topping 2,000 *livres per annum*; Tournehem and Aire each earn just under 1,500 *livres* annually.¹⁵

The *Bailliage* of Tournehem

The *bailliage* of Tournehem was the last major estate acquisition in the county of Artois. Its ownership was contested from 1280 until 1298 when it settled firmly in the hands of Robert II after being wrested from the count of Guines at the king's

¹³ Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11), lxxxiii. François Duceppe-Lamarre, "La fonction cynégétique des espaces boisés médiévaux à travers l'exemple des cervidés et lagomorphes (Nord-Pas-de-Calais, XIe-XVe siècles)," *Anthropozoologica* 28 (1998): 35–41; here 36.

¹⁴ François Duceppe-Lamarre, "La fonction cynégétique" (see note 13), 37–38.

¹⁵ These numbers are an average of yearly income and expenditures from the accounts of 1302–1303, 1304–1305, 1306–1307, and 1308–1309.

behest.¹⁶ Tournehem included three major castled landscapes: Tournehem, Mongardin, and La Montoire, which dominate the entries of the account books. Delmaire reports that the estate of La Montoire had “*la haie*,” an enclosed forest.¹⁷ Duceppe-Lamarre adds that La Montoire was likely an emparked forest, similar in structure to that at Hesdin, with woods, ponds, a windmill, and rabbit warrens.¹⁸ The area around Tournehem was well-wooded and had large, comitally-protected forests at Guines and Tournehem.¹⁹ The significant increase in wood lease income in 1306–1307 reflects the importance of wood resources to the *bailliage*; however, Tournehem managed and exploited other natural resources. Tournehem included several smaller holdings with fishponds that French historian A. Loisne notes supplied Robert II’s table with fish and from which grass was harvested.²⁰ The account books also demonstrate the importance of grass harvests and the economic presence of a warren. From 1302–1310, there does not seem to be any record of aristocratic hunting or entertainment at any of the estates in Tournehem.

The *Bailliage* of Aire

Aire is the smallest and least fiscally productive of the three *baillies* discussed in this study. It was a rural district and contained no emparked estates. Unlike Hesdin and Tournehem, Aire’s primary income was from the lease of agricultural land. Though there were at least two fisheries and two water mills, each generated negligible income. The *bailliage* boasted only one major river, the Lys, the end of which was not even navigable.²¹ King Philip IV’s military endeavors in the Low Countries (the military initiative in which Robert II perished in 1302) devastated much of Aire’s arable land. Unfortunately, the account entries provide no more information than noting that some rents in crops were forgiven due to the devastation of war.²² Despite the small number of total leases (25 in All Saints in

¹⁶ Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11), lxxxvii–viii.

¹⁷ Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11), lxxxviii.

¹⁸ Duceppe-Lamarre, “La fonction cynégétique” (see note 13), 37–38.

¹⁹ Albert Demangeon, *La Picardie et les régions voisines, Artois-Cambrésis-Beauvaisis* (Paris: A. Colin, 1905): 433–34; and also see maps in Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11).

²⁰ Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11), lxxxviii. A. Loisne, *Une cour féodale vers la fin du XIII^e siècle: l’hôtel de Robert II, comte d’Artois* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1920), 93.

²¹ Pierre Leman, *A la Recherche des voies romaines dans le Nord-Pas-de-Calais: archéologie, pédagogie et tourisme* (Bouvignies: Les Editions Nord Avril, 2011), 11.

²² The only mention seems to be in Candlemas in 1304 when the account mentions in the final total that they postponed, “*mis en souffrance*,” 10 raiseres of wheat from the rent of Communes that they cannot have because of the war. *Le compte general* (see note 11), 163, no. 2753.

1304, a number which stays steady), the average yearly income from rents of the *bailliage* is quite high, just under 900 *livres* in rent, suggesting Aire produced a significant amount of cereals.

Hesdin: Wood

Wood was Hesdin's most plentiful resource constituting nearly 47% of the total average yearly income.²³ Wood income derived primarily from renting the woods to local woodsmen for timber harvest (roughly 97% of wood income and nearly 50% of all income in the *bailliage*). Wood income also derived from the sale of *mort bois*, short dead sticks perfect for firewood, which with other wood that "cannot be used for carpentry," generated the remainder of wood income.²⁴ A close analysis of the expenditure descriptions for the *bailliage* and park reveals that the countess also utilized wood resources for fuel and to make repairs in the park. In particular, the accounts indicate that Hesdin's wood was frequently used for fuel when she visited the park.²⁵

The "wood rent" is a constant category of income for Hesdin calculated separately from other rent income (e.g. land or water leases), unlike in the accounts of Tournehem and Aire, in which wood rents are lumped in with other rents. Hesdin likely contains a separate administrative "wood rent" section because it generates significant amounts of income, which is not the case in either Tournehem or Aire. Wood income in Hesdin derived primarily from renting the woods by the *arpent*,²⁶ but also derived from other forms of wood leasing. Though not explicitly described in the entries, these leases were likely for the rights to harvest cyclically the larger trunks through pollarding or coppicing, both of which were common practices of cutting the wood either at the mid-trunk or base, respectively, to control wood growth for optimal timber harvest. The unspecified rent income may also have been for collecting *mort bois*, or "dead wood," which would have been bundled and sold, likely for kindling or firewood, depending on the size of the wood.²⁷ The account also records the direct sale of 4,000 bundled

²³ Percentages derived from 1303–1304, 1306–1307, and 1308–1309 totals with a wood average of 1,115 *livres* a year.

²⁴ A unit of measure equaling roughly an acre.

²⁵ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 124, no. 2113. "A Patin pour copper busce pour l'ostel du Marés par 2 jours, 18 d."; and 124, no. 2114: payment to a different man to cart it in: "A Jehan Oliete pour akariier cele busce par 1 jour: 5 s. 6 d."

²⁶ A unit of measure equaling roughly an acre.

²⁷ This pattern has also been recorded by Richard Keyser, "The Transformation of Traditional Woodland Management: Commercial Sylviculture in Medieval Champagne," *French Historical Studies* 32.3 (2009): 353–84; here 372–73.

sticks yearly from the forest at 4 l. per thousand for 16 l. total²⁸ and a singular entry for wood that “cannot be turned for carpentry,” forming the 3% “other” wood income.²⁹ Leasing of woods was significantly more profitable than selling wood bundles, which were sold and used as fuel.

Account entries do report regular expenses to cut firewood and cart it to the Marsh House in the park for the countess’s visits, presumably for heating the house, and fueling the kitchen during her stay. The origin of the firewood is unspecified, though most entries note that it had to be “cut and felled,” so it was likely from woodland under the countess’s control. It is also not the smaller sticks of *mort bois*, which are already dry at harvest. In another case, a Jehan Patin is paid for eight days of “making logs for the house in the Marshes” which seems to be for fuel, not construction.³⁰

Firewood was also carted to the Marshes “for the visit of the *seigneur* de Vauconlour.”³¹ In all of these cases, given the prohibitive nature of transportation costs in this period and the lack of recorded expense to purchase wood in the accounts, the wood was likely drawn from the countess’s managed woodland.³² The accounts also report that the household occasionally drew firewood from the countess’s stores, suggesting that wood was set aside expressly for later use by the countess.³³ The accounts periodically record extraordinary orders to cut special wood, for a task that is (unfortunately) unspecified.

The only regular wood expenditure was the wage for the sergeant of the woods; instead, the accounts are populated with occasional expenditures, such as expenses to “survey” the woods³⁴ or to cut some special wood,³⁵ or even for park repairs. For example, in the trimester of All Saints 1303, the fence around the watercress pond was repaired.³⁶ The account records the cutting and carting of (likely local and countess-controlled) wood to the watercress pond.³⁷ Though

²⁸ Archives du Nord, Lille, France (ADN) mss. B13597, fol. 6r: “pour iiii mill[ion]s de fagots vend[ui] au forestel p[ar] Col[art] le Rous du [com]m[an]t de Jeh[an] de la Porte”

²⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 20, no. 315: “De chokiaus, entrebus, escais, et autres pluisseurs mairiens vendus au forestier par le main Jehan de Hautemaisnil, serjant as bos, liquel ne pooient torner a carpenterie: 16 l. 3 s. 6 d.”

³⁰ ADPdc mss. A213/1: “A Jehan Patin pour faire busche pour l’ostel du mares par viii jours, xviii d. par jour, xii s.”

³¹ ADPdc mss. A236/1: “P[ou]r aides a sach[er] les bois pour le venue du [mon]sign[eu]r de Vauconlour a Hesd[in]” The entry goes on to include fishing for this occasion as well.

³² Keyser, “Transformation,” (see note 27), 374–75.

³³ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7r, “p[ou]r bos coup[er] p[ou]r le garnison du mares & pour le quisine a Pati[n] p[ar] 12 jours, a raison de 16 d. p[ar] jour, 16 s.”

³⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 23, no. 383.

³⁵ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 426: “Pour faukier les ausnois [alm trees] en tasque,” 4 l. 10 s.”

³⁶ ADPdc mss. A236/1: “Pour rap[er]eillier les c[re]ssonn[ie]res & les bois dentour ix s.”

³⁷ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 26, no. 441: “Pour les haies d’entour les cressonnières refaire, pour

possibly aesthetic in purpose, the fence was more likely to keep the eager mouths of the deer living in the park from decimating the watercress harvest, which was likely later consumed and/or sold. Wood and cord were also frequently required to repair both fishing and rabbit nets for Mahaut's hunters by a handyman of sorts who also cleaned the lodges and did other assorted tasks.³⁸ As with the firewood for the Marsh House, the wood was probably local and controlled by the countess herself as there is no cost for the wood recorded, only for labor.³⁹ This pattern of wood management and use, which draws on the *bailliage's* native wood resources to meet the park's repair and fuel needs, emphasizes the *bailliage's* status as the supplier of the park and also highlights the countess's extensive usage of woodland resources.

Hesdin: Water

Though heavily sylvan, Hesdin also boasted abundant aqueous resources. As with the woods, the countess leased harvesting rights, both for reeds and for fish, which account for roughly 15% of the *bailliage's* total yearly income. The aqueous environment and resources, more than woodland, demonstrate the complicated relationship between direct consumption of park resources and the reinforcement of aristocratic identity. Water was home to one of the most important dietary status symbols, but it also housed waterfowl and produced a desirable woody material called "osier."

Water income for Hesdin is consistently 51 l. a trimester, or 153 l. a year, just short of 16% of the average total income in the *bailliage* a year, an amount that rarely varies. This 16% derives from only two entries; every trimester the "grass of the pond" is harvested for 40 l.⁴⁰ and the countess lets a very particular water lease called an "*avalison*," which is "the right to fish for fish who come from a pond or reservoir when there is such a significant rise in the water level that it throws [the fish] in the river" —for 11 l. a trimester.⁴¹ Hesdin's sale model contrasts with the dominant rent model of the other two *bailliaages* that derives a nearly equal proportion of income from water leases as from wood leases.

cauper bos et apporter a lieu, bailliet en tasque: 27 s."

³⁸ ADPdc mss. 234/3: "Pour refaire les rois des goupilz & des connins & pour I douzaine de cauches, ix s."; and ADPdc A231/1: "Pour le corde du plen]iaus as poisons vi s."

³⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11 and 37), 26, no. 441: "Pour les haies d'entour les cressonnieres refiare, pour cauper bos et apporter a lieu, bailliet en tasque: 27 s."

⁴⁰ For example, *Le compte général* (see note 11), 118, no. 1998.

⁴¹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 118, no. 1999; and 193, no. 3272. Definition in index by Delmaire, pp. 293: "droit de pêcher les poissons qui s'échappaient d'un étang ou d'un réservoir lors d'une crue d'eau pour se jeter sans une rivière."

Despite the dearth of water-related income, the account books record a plethora of water-related expenses, especially those associated with fishing. Fishing is most visible through its incurred expenses as its product was rarely sold. The ponds at Hesdin regularly supplied the countess's table with fish. In All Saints 1306, several entries record a project to "fix the boats for the fishery."⁴² Paired with the references on the use of seine nets⁴³ and costs to carry nets to fish in the Marshes,⁴⁴ these entries suggest fishing of the countess's ponds was organized and could have produced large catches (seine nets trap more fish than fishing line), when required.

Fresh fish was a luxury good reserved for the elite and the countess's fish were for her use rather than for sale.⁴⁵ Because fresh fish was reserved for the elite, their presentation would impress, and be appropriate, for the reception of the countess's wealthy and powerful guests.⁴⁶ In All Saints 1306, extra wood was cut and the ponds fished for the visit of Master Louis of Clermont and "other rich men."⁴⁷ The ponds at Hesdin regularly supplied the countess's table when she visited the park—with or without "rich men" visiting—and even graced her table in *other bailliages*.⁴⁸ In Ascension 1304, the accounts record that the pond in the "garenne" at the park and the canals of the *Marés* were fished for seven days in preparation for the arrival of the countess.⁴⁹ The accounts also show that fishing occurred on occasion at the countess's command. Fish also came from outside the ponds in the park proper. In an interesting case in the same term, fishing occurred at the Large Pond in Cercamp (about 12 miles outside of Hesdin) "before madame" and the fish were sent "back" by means of a mounted valet, presumably

⁴² ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7r: "p[ou]r despens fais p[ar] le main Symo[n] le Buef, p[ai]ement p[ou]r refaire les batiaus de la peski[er]e pour l'ouvrage du carpenti[er] p[ou]r 5 jours 4 s. p[ar] jour 20 s. pour 18 l."

⁴³ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 198, no. 3366.

⁴⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 198, no. 3360.

⁴⁵ Richard C. Hoffmann, "A Brief History of Aquatic Resource Use in Medieval Europe," *Helgoland Marine Research* 59.1 (Special Issue: "Ecological history of the Wadden Sea") (April 2005), 23.

⁴⁶ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v and 8r.

⁴⁷ ADPc mss. A36/1, fol. 8.

⁴⁸ D. Serjeantson and C.M. Woolgar, "Fish Consumption in Medieval England," in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. C.M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 102–30; and Christopher C. Dyer, "The Consumption of Fresh-Water Fish in Medieval England," *Medieval Fish, Fisheries, and Fishponds in England*, ed. Michael Aston (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988), 27–38; and Richard C. Hoffmann, "Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe," *The American Historical Review* 101.3 (1996), 631–69; and Edward Roberts, "The Bishop of Winchester's Fishponds in Hampshire, 1150–1400: their Development, Function, and Management," *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society* 42 (1986): 125–38.

⁴⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 199–200, no. 3401.

to be prepared for the countess's consumption.⁵⁰ Though ambiguous, this entry may mean that the countess enjoyed watching others fish.

The accounts show no evidence that the ponds were drained in between fish harvests or plowed and seeded with cereals, as Richard C. Hoffmann argues was considered the "best practice" for fish ponds in this period.⁵¹ This is likely because the ponds at Hesdin were not fisheries; Mahaut's pond produce was intended for limited household use and not for sale.⁵² Additionally, Mahaut's ponds were not only for fish; they were home to cosseted herons and swans. This household use of fish (and fowl) caught from the park's ponds complicates the expenditure-income breakdown; it is impossible to count the number of fish—or even attempt to calculate the equivalent monetary value of fish caught from the park's ponds—to know if raising fish was more economical than purchasing. The ponds were not maintained just for "practicality" or income, they were maintained to produce fresh fish as symbolic representations of power and as homes for equally symbolic birds.

The multi-purpose nature of the ponds would have been a further complication to the drain-and-leave-fallow method studied by Hoffmann. For example, the accounts also document the frequent, but irregular, cutting of the willows and osiers (a tree in the genus *Salix* and closely related to the willow⁵³) in the *Marés*.⁵⁴ For a small cost, the osier was carted up to the castle⁵⁵ and utilized by the household, possibly for making baskets as with modern usage. The accounts also indicate that the ponds of Hesdin were home to carefully nurtured waterfowl. Herons have a most significant presence in the account book. There is only one passing mention of swans in the ponds in the account books in these years; an

⁵⁰ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 198, no. 3357.

⁵¹ Hoffmann, "Medieval Fishing," 378.

⁵² A case of limited profit can be seen in Hoffmann's near-contemporaneous study of the ducal ponds in Burgundy. Richard C. Hoffmann, "'Carpes pour le Duc . . .': The Operation of Fish Ponds at Laperrière-sur-Saône, Burgundy, 1338–1352," *Archeofauna: Revista de la Asociación Española de Arqueozoología* 4 (1995): 33–45.

⁵³ The account books use two different words "saus" for willow and "osiere" for osier, though there may have been no real distinction in practice.

⁵⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 128, no. 2108; 128, no. 2109; 200, no. 3403.

⁵⁵ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v.

expense to “monitor the swans of the *Marés* for one day.”⁵⁶ Feeding the herons cost 3 s. each day, for a total of 25 l. 19 s. for the term of All Saints 1306.⁵⁷

The countess also retained a guard for the herons who was paid 6 d. *tournois* each day, for a total of 4 l. 11 s. 6 d. in All Saints 1306. The accounts mention a “*haironniere*” as a geographical reference and record the costs for physical supplies to carry warm water into the heronry.⁵⁸ Clearly the Countess expended great care on the herons’ upkeep.⁵⁹ The dominance of the heron in the account likely relates to their important role in training falcons for the hunt.⁶⁰ Mahaut’s biographer, late nineteenth-century director of the Archives départementales de Pas-de-Calais, Jules-Marie Richard, reports that Mahaut was fond of falconry, though no known documents attest to her direct participation in falconry.⁶¹ Other scholars have suggested that enclosed parks like Hesdin, though too small for a true long-ranging mounted hunt *à force*, could have hosted female hunting pursuits, such as falconry.⁶² Frederick II, author of the medieval treatise on hawking, contends falconry was best practiced in a watery environment.⁶³ If Hesdin and the Marshes

⁵⁶ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 27, no. 459. Incidentally, this also demonstrates the presence of swans in the Park three years earlier than the 1306 arrival that Hagopian van Buren posited. Van Buren, “Reality and Literary Romance in the Park of Hesdin,” 129. The rarity of swans displayed in the account books for these years is surprising considering the increasing significance of swan as a high-status food marker in England, and likely the other northern courts, in the early fourteenth centuries. See Umberto Albarella and Richard Thomas, “They dined on crane: bird consumption, wildfowling and status in medieval England,” *Acta zoologica cracoviensia* 45, special issue (2002): 23–38; here fig. 5, pp. 28.

⁵⁷ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 8r.

⁵⁸ AdPdC mss. A231/1.

⁵⁹ As with fish and the other elements of the park, the keeping and eating of fowl had additional symbolic connotations, which I do not address here. See: D. Serjeantson, “Birds: Food and a Mark of Status,” *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. C.M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 131–47; and D.J. Stone, “The Consumption and Supply of Birds in late Medieval England,” *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. C.M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 148–61.

⁶⁰ Sharon Farmer, “Landscapes of Power c. 1300” presented Nov. 2009 at the University of Michigan. In fact, Frederick II devoted an entire book to “Heron Hawking with Sakers and other Falcons.” Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, *The Art of Falconry: Being the De arte de venandi cum avibus of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen*, ed. Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1943), 317–57.

⁶¹ Other account book entries support Richard’s conclusion, such as hawking equipment given as rent payment. Jules-Marie Richard, *Mahaut, comtesse d’Artois and de Bourgogne (1302–1329)* (Monein: Editions Pyremonde, 2006), 97. This is a reprint of Richard’s 1887 biography: *Une petite-nièce de saint Louis, Mahaut, Comtesse d’Artois et de Bourgogne (1302–1329): étude sur la vie privée, les arts et l’industrie en Artois et à Paris au commencement du XIVe siècle* (Paris: H. Champion, 1887). Unfortunately, the pagination was not preserved in the new edition.

⁶² Naomi Sykes, “Animal Bones and Animal Parks,” *The Medieval Park: New Perspectives*, ed. Robert Liddiard (Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2007), 49–62; here 53–55.

⁶³ Frederick II, *The Art of Falconry* (see note 60), 321–22.

were indeed a venue for Mahaut's falconry, it would add an additional layer to the complicated web of status and internal resource consumption and perhaps explain why Mahaut's ponds were not drained.

The park at Hesdin had a watercress pond whose product was sold occasionally but likely also served an aesthetic purpose as watercress ponds were rented in the *bailliage* of Langley.⁶⁴ The account book indicates that there was some sort of barrier, "*la haie*," likely a hedge, around the watercress ponds that occasionally had to be "remade."⁶⁵ Based on the advice given by Piero Crescenzi in his ca. 1305 manual, *Ruralia Commoda*, on constructing a pleasure park, protection of ponds from animal predators was integral. He suggests that small walls be constructed around ponds "so neither otter nor other nocturnal animal is able to enter, and ropes or vines are stretched out over the pond, by which the predatory birds are frightened."⁶⁶ Hedges or covers would have also kept the hungry deer from eating produce destined for other purposes. It is likely this need for protection, from both human and animal, that necessitated a water guard. In fact, the park had two guards, one for the "waters" and one for the *Marés*, each earning roughly 10 d. a day. The guarding of the waters, the marshes, and the herons together cost 17 l. 9 s. 2.8 d. a trimester, roughly 52 l. *per annum*, 10% of the average non-works yearly expense. These water expenses (all from the park) constitute more than a third of the average yearly expenditures in the *bailliage* not recorded in the "Works" account; maintaining the beauty and utilizing the waters was an integral part of park management.

Hesdin: Land

As with the water section and in contradistinction to that on wood, land expenditures far outstrip income in this category. Partially this results from the bias in the account book against payment in kind and internal use, but primarily because land expenses are numerous and income low in Hesdin due to the aesthetic and entertainment demands of the park; land was not leased as it was in Tournehem and Aire. Expenses revolve around feeding and stocking animals in the menagerie and the labor, food, and transport costs concerning hunting deer, rabbits, and unwanted predators.

⁶⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 145, no. 2435.

⁶⁵ ADPdC mss. A236/1.

⁶⁶ "[...] ne lodria vel aliud animal nocens intrare possit, et funes aut vites super eam tendantur, quibus aves terreantur rapaces." Petrus de Crescentiis (Pietro de Crescenzi), *Ruralia commoda: das Wissen des vollkommenen Landwirts um 1300*, ed. Will Richter and Reinhilt Richter-Bergmeier. 4 vols. Editiones Heidelbergenses, 25 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1995), vol. 3, 126.

Despite hay's minor recorded fiscal impact, it figures prominently in the account books each All Saints term.⁶⁷ From these entries it is possible to determine that hay, or "*fain*," was harvested from two main locales within the park from the "gardens above and below the house of the *Marés*" and from the area "above and below the gardens."⁶⁸ These yields were then cut, bound, and taken to barns.⁶⁹ This was executed by one man, who was paid 10 l. 18 s. 4 d. for 164 days of cutting.⁷⁰ The cutting, binding, and hauling of the hay cost an additional 46 l. 13 s., bringing the cost for the annual All Saints' harvest and storage to roughly 60 l., about 12% of the average yearly expenditures with no clear elaboration of its monetary value.⁷¹ Wheat and oats were also harvested; however, they were primarily received in rents and from taxes in kind, returning an insignificant income when sold (41 l. on average) with an unspecified amount stockpiled for the countess's use.⁷² Thus, it is possible to demonstrate that internal use of harvest hay and cereals occurred, but due to the form of the accounts, it is impossible to determine exactly how much was kept for the countess's use or how much it would be worth in comparison to other natural resources.

Hagopian Van Buren noted that the lords of Hesdin maintained a menagerie and an aviary, but did not provide any details.⁷³ The account books can offer some insight on this topic with multiple expenditures for animals and their feed. Unspecified birds were purchased to live in the aviary. Bird feed was purchased every trimester, usually wheat and sometimes hemp (probably seeds, as in modern bird feed, though it is unspecified).⁷⁴ The wheat cost from 9 s.⁷⁵ to 110 s.,⁷⁶ while the hemp generally cost more, up to 45 s. a load,⁷⁷ depending on the amount purchased of both.⁷⁸ In one case, the countess even ordered a retainer to seek out

⁶⁷ For example, cut hay was carted to the barns or given as feed to animals in the Park, but the recorded expense in the account book is actually for the labor and tools involved in the cutting, not for the value of the hay itself. This leaves the specifics (amount, income, length, etc.) of the hay harvest a mystery.

⁶⁸ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 427; 25, no. 428.

⁶⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 430.

⁷⁰ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 425.

⁷¹ For example, as in a similar series of events, to a different laborer, in ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v.

⁷² *Le compte général* (see note 11), 20, no. 324.

⁷³ Hagopian Van Buren, "Reality and Literary Romance" (see note 3), 120.

⁷⁴ For example, ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 8: "P[ou]r oiseles acetes en ce t[er]me p[ou]r mettre en le gaiole, lx s." and "P[ou]r ii sest[er]s and mine de ble aceté pour les oiseles, 110 s." Also, fol. 95v: "P[ou]r kanevuise achatee p[ou]r les oiseles iii s. viiii d." and "P[ou]r iii mimes de bley achate p[ou]r les oiseles xxiii s. iii d."

⁷⁵ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 123, no. 2100.

⁷⁶ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 8.

⁷⁷ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 198, no. 3364.

⁷⁸ In 1303, "*olivete*," which Delmaire defines as a distilled oil for consumption was bought to feed

hemp in the river of Authie, in the neighboring *bailliage*, to feed the birds.⁷⁹ The birds themselves cost several *sous* each at purchase. The countess paid 29 s. 8 d. for purchased birds in 1303,⁸⁰ 5 s. for “little baby birds” in 1304,⁸¹ and 15 s. for the purchase of birds in 1306.⁸² Keeping these birds—which have no specified use and I can only guess were to enhance status and give pleasure to park visitors—required some cost and effort. Given their significant numerical, if not fiscal presence, in the account, the birds exemplify the close management of the park’s landscape.

The countess kept peacocks, in addition to the unnamed aviary residents, although it is unclear if these were “free-range” or confined to the aviary. The first entry concerning the peacocks falls in Candlemas 1303–1304 and the entries for the purchase of their food appear only occasionally in the accounts covered in this study.⁸³ On Candlemas 1303–1304, 1 *sestier* (roughly 8/10 of a liter) of oats was purchased for the peacocks costing 9 s. By Ascension 1307, the oats for the peacocks cost 31 s. 6 d.⁸⁴ It is not known if the number of peacocks increased (either through purchase or self-propagation), or if the cost for oats increased; both scenarios are possible as grain prices were increasing in this period.⁸⁵ The peacocks, though less expensive than other birds, constitute another management cost and elucidate some bird management practices. Peacocks were only rarely hunted and eaten and they were not used to manage other animal populations; their presence reinforces Hesdin’s status as an aesthetic estate.

Another animal that appears in the account book that reinforces the estate’s status as a “pleasure park” is the countess’s pet beaver. The beaver was regularly fed bread, which was purchased each trimester at the cost of 2 d. each day, totaling 28 s. 2 d. in All Saints 1303⁸⁶ and 15 s. 10 d. in Ascension 1304.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, the beaver died on December 13, 1306 and does not seem to have been replaced.⁸⁸ In Robert Fossier’s monumental oeuvre, *Le Commerce des Fourrures en Occident à la fin*

the birds instead of the hemp, along with the wheat, *Le compte general* (see note 11), 304; and 27, no. 456.

⁷⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 124, no. 2102.

⁸⁰ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 27, no. 455.

⁸¹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 122, no. 2081.

⁸² ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 8.

⁸³ Hagopian Van Buren, “Reality and Literary Romance,” (see note 3), 129.

⁸⁴ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 57v. A *sestier*, or *setier*, was roughly 8/10 of a liter according to Delmaire, *Le compte général* (see note 11), cxviii.

⁸⁵ Alain Derville, *L’agriculture du nord au Moyen Age : Artois, Cambresis, Flandre Wallonne* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1999).

⁸⁶ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 26, no. 454.

⁸⁷ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 199, no. 3393.

⁸⁸ ADPc mss. A221/4: P[ou]r le pain a le bievre du jour de le Touss[ains] jusq[ue]s p[ar] tout le xiii[e] de decembre q[ue] el e morut q[ui] sont xliii jours ii d. p[ar] jour vii s. ii d.

du Moyen Age, he notes that European beavers were not as popular for their fur as American beavers were.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, they were hunted, often for their musk, and also because of their destructive and obstructive nature.⁹⁰ Thus, they were nearly extinct in the wild by 1376 when Fossier reports that the Duchess of Burgundy received one as a gift and reportedly exclaimed she had never seen one before.⁹¹ Mahaut (and presumably her father before her) kept the beaver as part of the menagerie because of its rarity; it was a marvel and a demonstration of power and wealth.

Hunting as sport and for status, to eliminate unwanted animal predators, and for food and income (rabbits) were all integral to the management of an aristocratic estate. Numerous scholars have explored the role of hunting⁹² in aristocratic culture, especially in England, and some have even argued that it was the primary purpose of the noble park.⁹³ Although the significant number of uses already enumerated belies hunting as the primary purpose of Hesdin (or the other estates under the countess's control), entries and expenditures concerning hunting occurred frequently and cement Hesdin's designed "pleasure park" status. Although no direct references to aristocratic hunting appear in the account books for this study's years, multiple entries record a bevy of dogs supported by the countess at Hesdin.⁹⁴ Dogs were fundamental to the aristocratic hunt, a requirement thoroughly expressed by Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix, in his masterpiece, *Le Livre de la chasse*, written in late fourteenth-century.

⁸⁹ Robert Fossier, *Le Commerce de Fourrure en Occident à la fin du Moyen Age*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ecole Française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 111–12.

⁹⁰ Bryony Coles, *Beavers in Britain's Past*. WARP Occasional Paper, 19 (Oxford: Oxbow Books and WARP, 2006).

⁹¹ Fossier, *Le Commerce de Fourrure*, (see note 89), 109.

⁹² John Cummins, "Veneurs s'en vont en Paradis: Medieval Hunting and the "Natural" Landscape," *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe*, ed. John Howe (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 33–56; and Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1988); and Peter Herring, "Cornish Medieval Deer Parks," *The Lie of the Land: Aspects of the Archaeology and History of the Designed Landscapes in the South West of England*, ed. Robert Wilson-North (Exeter: The Mint Press and Devon Gardens Trust, 2003), 34–50; and Jean Birrell, "Who Poached the King's Deer?: A Study in Thirteenth Century Crime," *Midland History* 7 (1982): 9–25.

⁹³ Stephen A. Miles, *Parks in Medieval England*. Medieval History and Archaeology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). To some extent, Duceppe-Lamarre characterizes Hesdin in this way, which I believe oversimplifies the complex network of interrelationships between natural resources, food, power, and status.

⁹⁴ Interestingly, this treatise was dedicated to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (the man to whom the design of the Park at Hesdin was originally attributed), and a renowned hunter. Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix, *The Hunting Book of Gaston Phoebus: manuscrit français 616*, Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale*. Manuscripts in Miniature, 3 (London: Harvey Miller, 1998).

In the term of All Saints in 1303, a Clambaut le Goupilleur (“the Greyhound”) was paid to oversee five greyhounds and three boarhounds from Ascension Day to All Saints Day, 2 d. per greyhound, per day for a total of 11 l. 5 s. 4 d, and 2 d. per boarhound, per day, for 4 l. 4 s. 6 d, a total of 15 l. 9 s. 10 d for eight dogs in All Saints 1303.⁹⁵ The dogs also frequently had a “page” named Guillot who received a wage of 10 d. each day, bringing the trimester cost to 15 l. 10 s. and the yearly average 46 l. 10 s., 9% of the average yearly expenses just to feed and watch the dogs.⁹⁶ This does not include housing or veterinary costs, which would be listed separately on a case-by-case basis. Maintaining dogs for the hunt was expensive and “unproductive” fiscally; however, the purpose of the aristocratic hunt (rather than a servant’s hunting) was not productivity, it was for power and entertainment. These canine expenses confirm the park’s status as an entertainment rather than a profit estate and accentuate the importance of the hunt to aristocratic culture.

Within this study’s time range the sale of rabbits occurred only twice: Ascension 1304 and Ascension 1309. In 1304, 835 rabbits were sold from the warren at Hesdin at 17 d. per rabbit for a total of 59 l. 2 s. 11 d. In that same year, another 52 rabbits were sold that “the *bailliage* had in this year” for a total of 73 s. 8 d., although they came from an unspecified location in the *bailliage*.⁹⁷ In 1309, 800 rabbits were sold from the warren of Willemain (east of the park) at 14 d. each for a total of 46 l. 13 s. 4 d, about 2% of the average yearly income.⁹⁸ It appears that the countess had at least two warrens in this *bailliage* and that rabbits comprised part—albeit not a fiscally significant one—of the countess’s land management. In addition to the sale of rabbits, an entry in the term of Candlemas 1304 records the purchase of string “to make nets for the rabbits and to repair the old ones.”⁹⁹

This passing entry helps elucidate how the rabbits were caught. These nets would have been used by hunters in conjunction with the ferrets mentioned in the accounts,¹⁰⁰ as in the image from Phoebus’ hunting treatise,¹⁰¹ and were likely an important element in managing the population of the warrens.¹⁰² Rabbiting was a minor element of the park and the *bailliage*, bringing in relatively small amounts

⁹⁵ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 26, no. 449.

⁹⁶ For example, *Le compte général* (see note 11), 124, no. 2103; and ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 8.

⁹⁷ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 194, no. 3279.

⁹⁸ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 109.

⁹⁹ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 123, no. 2098.

¹⁰⁰ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 199, no. 3384.

¹⁰¹ Phoebus, *The Hunting Book* (see note 94), fol. 92. Gaston Phoebus does not approve of using nets or ferrets and does not really consider it “hunting” in the ritual aristocratic sense, but nevertheless, he explains how to catch rabbits using ferrets and traps.

¹⁰² Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 92), 237.

(60 l.) of income only occasionally, although Hesdin generates significantly more rabbit income than Tournehem and Aire. Unfortunately, the accounts do not mention if the rabbits were killed for the household's consumption, though rabbit was considered a luxury protein in this period and Gaston Phoebus devotes some attention to how to keep and capture rabbits.¹⁰³

Cost to manage animal pests occur regularly in the account books, particularly rewards to capture otters and eagles. Roussel des Loutres ("of Otters") hunted the waters for otters for several days several times a year. He was granted expenses for "the bread for his dogs for four days" and the "expenses of the said Roussel and his son for 4 days" in addition to 20 s. for catching an otter and an unidentified animal.¹⁰⁴ Roussel returned on Ascension 1307 when he "was commanded to hunt the waters of the park for otters."¹⁰⁵ Eliminating otters from the park was clearly important—so important that in Ascension 1304 a man was ordered to locate otter hunters "near Mondidier and at Reneval where they are" and bring them back to Hesdin.¹⁰⁶ Otters loved fish and were a common menace to noble fishponds.¹⁰⁷ Otters can overfish or scare the fish out of an area; they poached from the countess's personal fish supply. Both Gaston Phoebus and Piero Crescenzi warned against otters. Characteristically, Phoebus encourages a chase and Crescenzi advocates pond covers to deter the pests.¹⁰⁸

Venison was the elite protein. Even more than fish or rabbits, raising deer on their own land for their own consumption was an emblem of aristocratic status. Venison was the ultimate elite protein and the aristocratic park was its primary means of production. We know from other parks in England that meadow grasses fed the deer. In Mahaut's accounts, it appears that purchased grass, called vetch, occasionally supplemented the park's grasses. Irregular amounts of vetch were purchased each term suggesting several possibilities, including changing growing and eating patterns of the grass and deer. This pattern could also suggest that the countess needed to purchase vetch because she was preventing the deer from feeding on the park's plants, which she may have used for a different, invisible purpose.

Deer were well known for their ability to transform a verdant, well-vegetated area into short grassland quickly. Park caretakers constructed various types of pales and hedges in an effort to prevent deer from eating the trees and desirable

¹⁰³ Phoebus, *The Hunting Book* (see note 94), fol. 92

¹⁰⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 197, nos. 3353–55.

¹⁰⁵ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 58: "A Roussel des Loutres q[ui] fu mandes p[ou]r cach[er] es yaues du p[ar]c pour les lout[re]s, p[ou]r les despens de liu & de ses chie[n]s p[ar] v jours, v s. P[ar] jour, xxv s."; and "P[ou]r une loutre p[ri]se x s."

¹⁰⁶ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 198, no. 3362.

¹⁰⁷ Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 92), 148.

¹⁰⁸ Phoebus, *The Hunting Book* (see note 94), fol. 37. Crescenzi, *Ruralia Commoda* (see note 67), 26.

plants.¹⁰⁹ The purchase of such a significant amount of feed highlights that despite the impressive productivity of the park and its self-sustainability in terms of fish and wood, when it came to medieval range management, the countess was partially dependent on the market to meet the substantial nutritive demands of the park's animal tenants.

In addition to fishponds that supplied fish to the countess's household and guests, the recorded expenses in the accounts for the transport and salting of deer caught in Hesdin confirm the interconnected relationship of park and the countess's table, even if the table was in other estates. In some cases, it is clear that the deer were culled from the park and then salted for later consumption. After salting, the venison was sometimes transported to castles in other *bailliages* for consumption there.¹¹⁰ We also know that salted venison was stored in the cellar at Hesdin from regular wages to a cellar guard¹¹¹ and sent to the countess in Paris.¹¹² This culling, salting, and storage pattern emphasizes that aristocratic parks were maintained, at least in part, to supply elite protein.

The transport of deer and venison caught at Hesdin bridges the divide between "practical," "symbolic," and "entertainment" purposes. In some cases, deer were caught in the park at Hesdin and salted for later consumption or taken to another estate for the countess's consumption there. The term of All Saints 1303 was particularly active in this regard; the accounts record the expenditures for salt "for the venison that le Chat [one of Mahaut's hunters] caught at Hesdin" and also for an expense to "carry venison to Avesnes [this was an important estate and *bailliage* bordering Hesdin] to madame."¹¹³ In another case, that same hunter, le Chat, earned coin to "bring venison to the land of Guines [which is a forest in Tournehem] in a cart."¹¹⁴

In another case, the record of a sent letter provides further information: "for sending a letter to madame in Paris for Jehan de Creski who went hunting in the hunting reserve [*garenne*] and caught one red deer [*cierf*]."¹¹⁵ In this same term, two red deer and one fallow deer [*dain*] were sent to the countess in Paris by horse and valet.¹¹⁶ In the same term, more venison was sent to Paris to the countess.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Creighton, *Designs upon the Land* (see note 6), 132–34.

¹¹⁰ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 23, no. 375–76.

¹¹¹ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v.

¹¹² *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 418.

¹¹³ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 23, no. 374–75.

¹¹⁴ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 23, no. 380.

¹¹⁵ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 24, no. 395.

¹¹⁶ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 414.

¹¹⁷ *Le compte général* (see note 11), 25, no. 418.

Aristocratic hunting reserves were not only maintained so that nobles could hunt, but also to provide venison.¹¹⁸

These elite hunting spaces, such as the “*garenne*” from which these deer are harvested for venison, are utilized for simultaneously practical and entertainment purposes. Though there is no direct reference to aristocratic hunting in the account books the meat itself was a demonstration of status and an important element in noble celebrations and entertaining.¹¹⁹ As multiple scholars have suggested, game, due to hunting restrictions for non-elites and prohibitive costs, was a luxury good.¹²⁰ Thus, the account books record a guard for the “cellar” who was instructed to guard the wine and venison, even when it was shipped from another estate.¹²¹ It is not explicitly stated that the venison was salted before transport, but it likely was. Transporting fresh meat was rare and more expensive as it required additional costs for rapid transport to prevent spoilage.¹²²

Some Conclusions: A Holistic Approach to Hesdin?

All of these elements—wood, waters, and land—highlight Hesdin’s strictly managed and multi-purpose landscape, but the account books also emphasize that the park at Hesdin *was* a pleasure park. It was a productive estate that drew on occasion from its countryside, but very rarely from outside the *bailliage*. One of a few integral, imported foodstuffs was wine. Accounts record its arrival and

¹¹⁸ There are many references in Phoebus’s fourteenth-century manual on hunting to retainers doing the actual hunting for food purposes, and Cummins notes this in *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 92); however, most studies on hunting parks seem to gloss over this element, such as S. A. Miles, “The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society,” *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief, and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge, Hampshire, and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 19–38.

¹¹⁹ Though a rather extravagant example, the amount of food offered at the knighting of Philip the Fair’s sons is demonstrative of this: E. A. R. Brown and Nancy Freeman Regalado, “‘Le grante feste’: Philip the Fair’s Celebration of the Knighting of his Sons in Paris at Pentecost of 1313,” *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson. *Medieval Studies at Minnesota*, 6 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 56–86.

¹²⁰ See Annie Grant, “Food, Status and Religion in England in the Middle Ages: an Archeozoological Perspective,” *L’animal dans l’alimentation humaine: les critères de choix: Actes du Colloque International de Liège (26–29 novembre 1986)*, ed. Liliane Bodson. *Anthropozoologica*, Numéro spécial, 2 (Paris: Laboratoire d’Anatomie comparée, 1988), 149–87.

¹²¹ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v.

¹²² This issue has never been studied, but it has been addressed for the transport of fish for the King of England: J. M. Steane, “The Royal Fishponds of Medieval England,” *Medieval Fish, Fisheries, and Fishponds in England*, ed. Michael Aston. 2 vols. BAR British Series, 182 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988), vol. 1, 39–68; here 59–60.

subsequent storage in the cellar underneath the house in the *Marés* in preparation for Mahaut's visits.¹²³

Hesdin embodies the multi-purpose nature of medieval aristocratic estates, but simultaneously demonstrates that it was a highly managed, designed, and structured landscape that exploited the sylvan and agricultural resources of its countryside to support the entertainment elements of the estate, with little lease of land. In this way, Hesdin differs from Aire and Tournehem, whose management centered primarily on the lease of land, waters, and woods. Expenses at Hesdin also far outstrip those of the other *bailliages*; Hesdin's expenses average 500 l. a year on non-construction costs, with around half of that going to the maintenance of animals in the park. With the expenses from the "works" included (which were recorded on an entirely separate roll as they were so numerous) the *bailliage's* average yearly expenses are 1,379 l. Aire and Tournehem average less than 500 l. a year, including works (in fact, works costs are so minor at Aire they are only expressed as a lump sum).

This survey demonstrates that the countess managed and utilized her lands in many different ways, ways often dependent on both her wishes and "purpose" of the land, and on the resources of the landscape. Scholarly attention has focused heavily on the estate of Hesdin and its noble playground, but as this survey shows Hesdin's aesthetic management was not exclusive; Mahaut also exploited her landscape for natural resources, such as with the frequent sale of wood products. This study also serves to highlight the fiscal and symbolic importance of the other *bailliages* under the countess's control.

These few examples from Mahaut's exploitation of Hesdin's woodland, waters, and meadows demonstrate that her landscape was intensively and self-consciously managed for internal consumable goods, for income, and for entertainment and prestige. Rural aristocratic landscapes and parks like Hesdin were designed to be experienced on multiple levels; they were relaxing retreats, settings for the production of luxury products and entertainment, and arenas for the demonstration of power, wealth, and control. Scholarship needs to consider all elements of the aristocratic park at once. An *in toto* approach demonstrates that land and the rural landscape functioned in medieval society not just as an invisible, exploited resource, but also as a symbol of power and an integral part of the construction of aristocratic identity.

¹²³ ADN mss. B13597 (see note 28), fol. 7v.

Chapter 10

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Hunting or Gardening: Parks and Royal Rural Space

Efforts to tame the wilderness and, perhaps just as importantly, to gain glory through taming the wilderness are at the heart of this study of rural space as a meaningful cultural scene. Examining changes in the way English monarchs conceptualized and used rural spaces provides a graphic view of their sense of place in the complex set of relationships that defined England politically, socially, and economically during their reigns. Moving from the Normans' private royal forests to the Stuart monarchs' open public parks, which were built on land that earlier had been royal hunting grounds, we can trace the changing nature of political authority, its sources, the extent of its powers, and its ties to those governed. Highlighting the extent to which early rulers used this politically charged space, the eighteenth-century political writer Thomas Paine claimed that "to read the history of kings [one] would be almost inclined to suppose that government consisted of stag hunting."¹

In addition to the obvious physical pleasure they took in hunting, these early kings gained political momentum when their citizens as well as foreign audiences envisioned them heroically riding through dark wildernesses challenging dangerous creatures and making the country-side safe for all. Moreover, at the same time, they could, through ritualistic ceremony in the forest, demonstrate their spectacular, almost godlike, command of the natural world that manifests itself in great fertility and beauty, inspiring awe in those they governed. In the words of Steven Drew, "The hunt served as a potent ritual that reinforced visibly and symbolically the natural and social hierarchies."² In both of these acts, early

¹ Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man* (Boston: Thomas Hall, 1794), 244. For an online version, see: http://www.ucc.ie/social_policy/Paine_Rights_of_Man.pdf (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

² J. Drew Stephen, "Falstaff and the Culture of the Hunt," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74.2 (2005):

English monarchs were partaking in an ancient means of displaying absolute domination over their territory. Centuries later, however, when Charles II is seen by his subjects walking the pathways of St. James Park, the English monarch is ironically often hunting the “heart” instead of the “hart” in a space reworked to form an early modern display of his role as ruler. Far from proving the strength of his masculine power through heroic feats in the untamed forest, he seeks to command the political, religious, and economic network of bureaucrats, bankers, merchants, clerics, and MPs on which his reign depended as well as the social and cultural realms that were also central to the success of his reign.

As Thomas Wiedemann explains in his book *Emperors and Gladiators*, control over the natural world in pre-industrial societies proved the magnificence of the ruler through his ability to dominate the wilderness; and his mastery over animals, in turn, symbolized at least as far back as the early Persian kings his domination of the social world.³ Instead of siting these displays of dominion in rural areas, the Roman emperors, who did little actual hunting themselves, developed the arena to symbolize through an artificial display their ability to tame and control the terror of the wilderness. The arena, then, becomes for them the margin where civilization and the wild come together.⁴ It becomes the “place where the civilized world confronted lawless nature.”⁵ To celebrate their ability to tame this world, emperors, who did not themselves battle in the arena, ordered elaborate *venatio* scenes to be performed in their honor and even surrounded themselves with exotic or dangerous animals in their households to symbolize the extent of their dominance.

In post-Roman England, with its heavy forestation and large supply of game, early rulers also set aside space to display symbolically their preeminence in both the wilderness of the natural world and in human political, social, religious, and economic communities by asserting their absolute rights to seize large tracts of rural land for royal forests while they also gained great personal pleasure from hunting on these lands. Even before the Norman Conquest, English rulers had asserted their right to hunt on any forested land they desired, especially in the south-eastern area of the country which was heavily forested at that time. Both Cnut and Edward the Confessor had forest laws to protect the land on which they hunted.

When William the Conqueror set up tracts of land like the New Forest in Sussex Weald, or Wood, as a royal preserve, many peasants' landholdings were taken under his harsher forest laws, ultimately derived from those issued by

729–39; here 731. See also the contribution to this volume by Jacqueline Stuhmiller.

³ Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 62–64.

⁴ Wiedemann, *Emperors* (see note 3), 91.

⁵ Wiedemann, *Emperors* (see note 3), 179.

Charlemagne.⁶ Although royal forests were often heavily wooded, they also included many other types of rural spaces, including whole villages, manors, swamps, meadows, and arable fields. In law the rural forest at this time was defined as “territor[ies] of woody grounds and fruitful pastures, privileged for wild beasts and fowls of forest, chase and warren, to rest and abide there in the safe protection of the King, for his delight and pleasure.”⁷ While the king might own part of the land within the royal forest, he didn’t own all of it. Others could retain ownership of their land, but not the use of the trees or brush on it, and most importantly, they could not hunt on their own land without special grants from the king. Deer and boar were the primary animals protected by the Norman forest laws, but landowners had to seek royal permission even to own hunting dogs or to set up a warren to hunt rabbits and other small game. “The forest laws of England produce[d] an agonistic space on which the limits of monarchical power [were] played out.”⁸

It has been estimated that by the thirteenth century one quarter of the land in England had been taken to form royal forests (and this land area had been larger earlier), demonstrating just how extensive the monarch’s control of this expansive area of rural space was.⁹ In fact, the Norman kings established a new justice system separate from the other court systems just to handle infractions within the royal forests. With a mandate to provide for and protect the king’s pleasure and with the king as its supreme magistrate, the forest laws at work during the medieval period ensured English rulers an ideal space in which to brandish their authority. Even a king such as Richard I, who spent less than a year of his reign in England, would have benefited from the display of dominance provided by his large tracts of royal forest.

In an article exploring the cultural implications of illegal hunting in the royal forests, Barbara Hanawalt states that poaching “at its most fundamental . . . powerfully reinforced male gender identity.”¹⁰ Although written from the poachers’ perspective—who were primarily nobles, gentry, and clerics—her study examines the appeals this activity had for men: from providing for the “festive

⁶ Charles R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England*. The Middle Ages ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania, 1979), 4.

⁷ Carl J. Griffin, “More-than-Human-Histories and the Failure of Grand State Schemes: Sylviculture in the New Forest, England,” *Cultural Geographies* 17.4 (2010): 451-72; here 453.

⁸ Randy P. Schiff, “The Loneness of the Stalker: Poaching and Subjectivity in *The Parlement of the Thre Age*,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 51.3 (2009): 263-93; here 263.

⁹ Young, *Royal Forests* (see note), 5.

¹⁰ Barbara A. Hanawalt, “Men’s Games, King’s Deer: Poaching in Medieval England,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 18.2 (1988): 175-93; here 192.

significance of eating venison" to the "chief status symbol . . . the ability to shoot well."¹¹

Among the local knights and lesser noblemen patterns of regular poaching parties emerge, indicating that poaching was more than a sport. In addition to family, the parties included the local clergyman, squires, pages, members of the *meinie*, local royal officials and even forest administrators. . . . In all cases they repaired with their booty to the castle of the most powerful man among them where they held a feast. For the nobility, therefore, poaching was not simply a pastime but a way of strengthening local alliances and loyalties.¹²

Although the king's forest officials would have been the most immediate targets for these groups of upper-class transgressors, they were ultimately challenging the rule of the monarch. In fact, one group of gentlemen in the West Midlands celebrated the news of the death of Henry III by taking their dogs and hunting weapons out to romp around the royal forest for the day.¹³ The Norman aristocracy normally did not poach out of necessity.¹⁴ "Poaching reinforced masculine identity by hunting prey that was not only expressly forbidden, but that also technically belonged to another man Hunting by itself encouraged male camaraderie by its group dynamic, but poaching raised the bar by increasing risk."¹⁵

As described in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, William the Conqueror's concept of himself as monarch, his rights and all-powerful rule are reflected quite clearly in his creation of royal forests:

He sætte mycel deorfrið 7 he lægde laga þærwið, þæt swa hwa swa sloge heort oððe hinde, þæt hine man sceolde blendian. He forbæd þa heortas swylce eac þa baras, swa swiðe he lufode þa headeor swilce he wære heora fæder. Eac he sætte be þam haran þæt hi mosten freo faran. His rice men hit mændon 7 þa earme men hit beceorodan. Ac he wæs swa stið þæt he ne rohte heora eallra nið, ac hi moston mid ealle þes cynges wille folgian, gif hi woldon libban oððe land habban, land oððe eahta oððe wel his sehta. Wala wa, þæt ænig man sceolde modigan swa hine sylf upp ahebban 7 ofer ealle men tellan.¹⁶

¹¹ Hanawalt, "Men's Games" (see note 10), 180, 182.

¹² Hanawalt, "Men's Games" (see note 10), 187. Also see the article in this volume by Lia B. Ross on aristocratic attitudes toward the natural world.

¹³ Hanawalt, "Men's Games" (see note 10), 190.

¹⁴ Jean Birrell, "Aristocratic Poachers in the Forest of Dean: Their Methods, Their Quarry and Their Companions," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 119 (2001): 147–54; here 149.

¹⁵ Birrell, "Aristocratic Poachers" (see note 14), 149.

¹⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1086. Manuscript E: Bodleian MS Laud 636 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: An Electronic Edition*, 5. <http://asc.jebbo.co.uk/e/e-L.html> (last accessed on October 13, 2011).

[He made great protection for the game
 And imposed laws for the same,
 That who so slew hart or hind
 Should be made blind.
 He preserved the harts and boars
 And loved the stags as much
 As if he were their father.
 Moreover, for the hares did he decree that they should go free,
 Powerful men complained of it and poor men lamented it,
 But they had to follow out the king's will entirely
 If they wished to live or hold their land,
 Property or estate, or his favour great.]¹⁷

Instead of appearing to oversee the well being of his people, William the Conqueror was regarded as a protector only to forest animals and as a father only to his stags.

The second Norman king, William II, or William Rufus, also enjoyed this kingly sport of hunting in the New Forest created by the Conqueror, but seems not to have won the symbolic forest battle. Depending on whether we believe the account of William of Malmesbury or of Orderic Vitalis, the king's friend, Walter Tirel, Lord of Poix, shot him accidentally or killed him purposefully and fled to France after the killing, while Rufus's brother and heir, Henry I, made for Winchester to claim the royal treasury. Since Rufus had treated the English clergy with derision, even running St. Anselm out of the country, many at the time saw the death not as a symbol of a weak king, but as a symbol of a faithless king brought down by the hand of God.¹⁸ He clearly, therefore, did not rule by divine right. When we look at the forest activity of his successor, Henry I, we look to Woodstock, which was listed in the *Doomsday Book* (1086) as a royal deer park with no settlements.¹⁹ Around the year 1110, Henry I (1068–1135) enclosed the park with a seven-mile stone wall, which preserved his deer and provided a space for his menagerie of lions, lynxes, leopards, and camels, animals associated with classical tales of warriorship, but not seen in England for tens of thousands of years. Just having the resources to import these animals into England in the early twelfth century must have impressed his people.²⁰

¹⁷ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 165.

¹⁸ "William II," <http://www.historybookshop.com/articles/events/william-2-death-of-ht.asp> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

¹⁹ "Woodstock," <http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/woodstock.htm> (last accessed on Oct. 4, 2011).

²⁰ In 1252 the collection was transferred to the Tower of London and from there, in 1835, to Regent's Park, where it formed the basis of London Zoo.

Although later descendants of William the Conqueror made minor changes to his hunting laws, sometimes softening their impact, as late as Richard I's Assize in 1198, the penalty for killing deer was physical mutilation, plucking out the offender's eyes and cutting off his testicles.²¹ While blinding the offender would be enough to stop his infringing in the future, emasculation of a person who dared challenge the king's sole right to hunt or to designate who may hunt in his forests symbolically reasserts the extent of the monarch's potency and his right to render anyone else impotent.

Henry II (1133–1189) would often exile offenders of the forest laws, making clear that the royal forests were not the only spaces over which he had absolute control. Furthermore, after putting down the rebellion fostered by his sons, he demonstrated the strength of his hold on the country by charging nobles, gentry, clergy and commoners with infractions against the forest laws even though the revolt had had nothing to do with forests.²² Known for his almost obsessive love of hunting, Henry II would stay in his hunting lodges rather than in castles when he traveled around the country. Henry II found the royal park at Woodstock ideal to enjoy both his passion for hunting and for ladies. He steadily and considerably enlarged Henry I's house until it began to resemble a royal palace, which included a bower retreat for Rosamund Clifford and a maze.²³

The chroniclers of the period commented on his hunting: in Gerald of Wales's words, "He was addicted to the chase beyond measure; at crack of dawn he was off on horseback, traversing waste lands, penetrating forests and climbing the mountain-tops, and so he passed restless days."²⁴ Walter Map said he was "a great connoisseur of hounds and hawks, and most greedy of that vain sport."²⁵ It is probably no coincidence that Marie de France, writing during his reign and well acquainted with his court, thought by some to be his half sister, often narrates plots in which a king spends his time in the forest hunting. In her lai *Equitan* she shows us a king who sleeps with his seneschal's wife, linking hunting and sexual potency:

Ja, se pur ostïer ne fust,
Pur nul busuin ki li creüst
Li reis ne laissast sun chacier,
Sun deduire, sun riveier.

²¹ Young, *Royal Forests* (see note 5), 30.

²² Young, *Royal Forests* (see note 5), 24.

²³ For a detailed biography of Henry II, see Richard W. Barber, *Henry Plantagenet: A Biography of Henry II of England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001).

²⁴ Quoted in Young, *Royal Forests* (see note 5), 24.

²⁵ Quoted in Young, *Royal Forests* (see note 5), 58.

[Except for war, no task, no thing—
 No emergency—could draw the king
 From his hunting and his pleasures,
 And enjoying the river's leasures.] (24–28)

...

Priveement esbanier
 En la cuntree ala chacier.
 La u li seneschal maneit,
 El chastel u la dame esteit,
 [se] herberjat li reis la nuit,
 Quant repeirout de sun deduit.²⁶

[Hunting pleasure of a private sort,
 He went into the country for sport.
 In the manor of his seneschal,
 The castle where the lady stayed,
 The king took shelter at nightfall;
 He needed rest, so hard he'd played.]²⁷ (43–48)

This king is eventually punished for having a sexual relationship with his seneschal's wife. Given Henry's behavior, Marie's lai could reflect the general perception of the monarch during Henry II's reign as someone who recognized no boundaries when it came to his passions: hunting and courting women.

Other early medieval literature in England also uses conduct in the forest to characterize the ruler. In *Havelok the Dane*, for example, a romance on the Matter of England written a little later than Marie's lais, the new ruler Havelok is celebrated for the symbolic action of cleansing the wilderness:

To yemen [control] wilde wodes and pathes
 Fro wicke men that wolde don scathes [harm],
 And forto haven alle [therefore have all] at his cry [command],
 At his wille, at hise mercy,
 That non durste ben [none dare be] him ageyn [against].²⁸ (268–72)

Although the wilderness was sometimes configured as a place of purification for hermits, it was more often seen as a vile place:

²⁶ Marie de France, "Equitan." *Wikisource*. La bibliothèque libre (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

²⁷ Marie de France, "Equitan," trans. Judith Shoaf. 1992. http://lecygne.org/Le_Cygne_%28A_Peer-reviewed_Journal%29_and_the_International_Marie_de_France_Society (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

²⁸ "Havelok the Dane," *Middle English Verse Romances*, ed. Donald B. Sands (New York, Chicago, et al: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1966), 58–129; here 65.

[B]estiality, fallenness, errancy, perdition—these are the associations that accrued around forests in the Christian mythology. In theological terms forests represented the anarchy of matter itself, with all the deprived darkness that went with this Neoplatonic concept adopted early on by the Church fathers.²⁹

Cleansing the wilderness was almost an act on par with restoring the earth to its original garden state.

Another early romance focusing on forest property reverses the usual pattern of heroic ruler taming the wilderness to show a principled outlaw overpowering King John in his lawless land. In *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, extant in an Anglo Norman prose romance, Fulk first kills a dragon, proving his command of the natural world, and then captures King John in the New Forest, the royal hunting forest begun by William the Conqueror.³⁰ What he wants is this land back, so he forces John to restore all his and his companions' lands in England. Shown as a moral and legal victory, Fulk's forceful recovery of his land from the king is quite literally as impressive as his killing dragons, the most feared animal in the wilderness.

The authors of these works of fiction appear to understand the role command over forests and everything in them, human and animal, played in shaping the public image of the monarch. This command also helped fill the royal coffers. Whenever a ruler's foreign wars got too expensive, he could always find ways to milk the royal forests.³¹ Providing income when needed, the royal forests, therefore, also ensured that a monarch could afford to look like the supreme leader he wished to be considered.

Early Modern Royal Spaces

As we move forward in time, the concept of the all-powerful ruler whose claims to land for his own private use, whether to glorify himself and his reign or to amuse himself, gives way to the publicly engaged royal figure who shares public gardens that used to be royal forests with his citizens as they gossip, conduct business, and establish their social hierarchies through displays of wealth and acquaintanceships.

²⁹ Robert P. Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 61.

³⁰ *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, ed. E. J. Hathaway, P. T. Ricketts, C. A. Robson, and A. D. Wilshire. Anglo-Norman Text Society (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976).

³¹ B. M. S. Campbell, "The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Past & Present* 188 (2005): 3–70; here 6.

If we turn to two royal deer parks created for hunting in the sixteenth century, the changes are striking. Hyde Park and St. James Park, both built by Henry VIII, were set up on rural land then outside of London to allow the king to hunt since he spent greater amounts of time there than his medieval counterparts had. No longer able simply to take the tracts of land without a just cause, or the semblance of a just cause, the king bought one of these, the land for St. James Park, and seized the other, Hyde Park, from the monks of Westminster Abbey during the Reformation. Both were used primarily as royal hunting enclosures until the Stuarts' time.

Hyde Park

As far back as the Domesday Book, the land for Hyde Park, called the Manor of Eia, belonged to monks from Westminster Abbey. In 1536, when King Henry VIII seized the manor, some of the land was sold for money, and the rest was made "into a vast hunting park that stretched from Kensington to Westminster."³² Fencing in the area and damming up the Westbourne Stream to make water pools for his deer, the king made himself a private enclosure in which to sport at his leisure. Morally, hunting was justified as a means of avoiding idleness, but Henry VIII's famous song "Pastime with Good Company" lets us see the joy he took in the sport: "Hunt, sing and dance, / My heart is set."³³

However, he also put on royal hunts in Hyde Park to entertain ambassadors and foreign diplomats while important members of court watched from grandstands and feasted in temporary banquet houses. Therefore, at the same time that it was used for rigorous exercise, this space was also used for dramatic political displays, which shifts our perspective on royal rural space and the monarchs who command them. When the ruler redirects the flow of ancient streams and turns once wild land on which deer, boar, and wild bulls roamed freely into an artificial entertainment park with grandstand seats and banquet halls, it is no longer just his power, strength, and authority on display; these entertainments also allowed the king to showcase his magnificence in social and cultural terms for foreign audiences and, of course, women viewers. The royal forest at Hyde Park had become an artificial arena for the privileged to view spectacle and drama, victory and defeat, athletic prowess, and death, and as such, one of the many courtly displays Henry VIII commissioned to exalt his reign and celebrate its legitimacy.

³² "Hyde Park." London's Personal Space. The Royal Parks. www.royalpark.gov.uk (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

³³ Henry VIII, "Pastime With Good Company," [British Library Additional Ms. 31922, ff.14v-15] Online at: <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/pastime.htm> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

St. James Park

When Henry VIII purchased the area of marshland through which the River Tyburn flowed to the west of York Place, recently acquired from Cardinal Wolsey, it was land on which a women's leper hospital dedicated to St. James the Lesser had originally stood in the thirteenth century. Wild animals, forests, and farms filled the wasteland when it was bought from Eton College to form a deer park relatively close to the Palace at Westminster. After Henry enclosed the land and stocked it with deer, he first had a hunting lodge built on the property. This was later expanded to become St. James Palace. Known to be passionate about the chase, it was said that Henry VIII gets up daily except for holy days "at 4 or 5 o'clock, and hunts till 9 or 10 at night. He spares no pains to convert the sport of hunting into a martyrdom."³⁴ After he received a gift of wild boar from the King of France in 1526, he described the experience of hunting them as "a King's game."³⁵

After he had made St. James Park into a royal hunting space, Henry commissioned the royal gardens at Whitehall to be built on the border of this hunting space, inspired by his competition with the estates of his rival, Francis I, such as Fontainebleau.³⁶ In his excellent study of gardens of the period, Roy Strong explains the political nature of Henry VIII's building campaign: "As the chivalrous warrior prince gave way to the politician and man of affairs, an obsession with building set in . . . [T]he king of England, as he defied the rest of Christendom and proclaimed himself the image of God on earth, needed a setting worthy of the extreme powers which were now attributed to him."³⁷ Henry's gardens at Whitehall were next to tennis courts, a tilt gallery and a cockpit, outdoor spaces still in favor in a court that appreciated athletic contests. Built on what had once been an orchard, this garden featured wooden animals associated with the Tudor heraldic beasts—Edward III's griffin, the Beaufort yale, the Richmond white greyhound and white hind—perched on marbled wooden columns throughout this space and enclosed by garden rails painted in green and white stripes, the Tudor colors.³⁸ Much easier to care for than live animals, these carved animals

³⁴ Alison Weir, *Henry VIII: The King and His Court* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), 106.

³⁵ Weir, *Henry VIII* (see note 34), 106.

³⁶ See the article in this volume by Abigail P. Dowling that details the ways in which Countess Mahaut d'Artois used the medieval park at Hesdin for practical, aesthetic, and symbolic ends.

³⁷ Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, (London: Thames, 1979), 25.

³⁸ Strong, *Renaissance Garden* (see note 37), 25 for descriptions of similar features that Henry had installed in the gardens at Hampton Court. Features of the garden can be seen behind the figures in the painting *The Family of Henry VIII*, c. 1543–1547, by an unknown artist, after Holbein, now in Hampton Court Palace.

symbolized in a material way the regal control of the natural world that Henry displayed physically when hunting in his deer parks.

Although Elizabeth I could hunt perfectly well, being able, among other things, to tell the age of a hart from the size of its dropping, she also indulged her love of pageantry and pomp in the St. James deer park, and fetes of all kinds were held there during her reign. According to Edward Walford, during the reigns of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts, "the park was little more than a nursery for deer."³⁹ Although Elizabeth was not a serious enforcer of forest law, she recognized the symbolic importance of controlling hunting space. In fact, in 1572 she and Leicester broke into Lord Berkeley's private deer park and slaughtered twenty-seven of his deer.⁴⁰ In *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*, ca. 1575, the writer and poet George Turbervile tells us that in England a ritual took place at royal hunts where the huntsman, "on his knees, handed the hunting knife to the King, who stabbed the hart's carcass as if he were killing the hart. This English practice was adopted whenever Elizabeth I hunted." Since we are assured, however, that the monarch went through this ritual after the hart was dead for the safety of the monarch, it is clearly an act more symbolic than heroic.⁴¹ Control of the park, long associated with dominion over symbolic worlds, gave Elizabeth another venue and means to project her version of royal splendor and authority, not one built on heroic deeds on the battlefield, but one founded on ritual presentation of a goddess-like figure known for its purity, beauty, wisdom, and strength. The fairy queen, after all, lived in the forest.

When we turn to the first Stuart monarch, James I was a much more avid hunter and took a stringent approach to enforcing game laws, even denying hunting privileges to minor gentry.⁴² Among the many stories about his hunting activities, we know that James's favorite hound was once kidnapped and returned with a note asking for the dog to intercede with the king since he saw more of the king than his subjects did, that James, always tied to his horse, pissed in his saddle because he refused to get off while hunting, and that his brother-in-law, King Christian of Denmark, had to wait an extra day on his ship before being greeted

³⁹ Edward Walford, Walter Thornbury, and George Walter, "Westminster: St. James's Park," *Old and New London: A Narrative of Its History, Its People, and Its Places*, vol. 4 (London, Paris, and New York: Cassell, 1879). See online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45182> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Theis, "The 'ill kill'd' Deer: Poaching and Social Order in The Merry Wives of Windsor," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 43.1 (2001): 46–73; here 50.

⁴¹ "Hunting in Tudor England," <http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/index.htm> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

⁴² Theis, "The 'ill kill'd' Deer" (see note 40), 50.

on his arrival because James was out hunting, paying more attention to his personal interests than to political ceremonies and international diplomatics.⁴³

His hunting, however, took place far from court in forests with hunting lodges where he could avoid public view. In St. James Park, therefore, he had the land converted from hunting grounds to garden space, still, however, royal and private. Newly drained and landscaped with most of the trees cut down, the park featured a large pool known as Rosamond's Pond as well as several small ponds, channels and islands used to lure birds that were shot for the royal kitchens. In the description of the St. James Garden in 1637 by the Sieur de la Serre for the Queen's mother, Marie de Medici, he describes two main gardens, one an elaborate embroidered parterre in box with flowers inside and the other an orchard with walks. Sieur de la Serre continues:

[The gardens] are bounded by a great park, with many walks, all covered by the shade of an infinite number of oaks, whose antiquity is extremely agreeable, as they are thereby rendered the more impervious to the rays of the sun. This park is filled with wild animals; but, as it is the ordinary walk of the ladies of the court, their [viz., the ladies'] gentleness has so tamed them, that they all yield to the force of their attractions rather than the pursuit of the hounds.⁴⁴

This collection of wild animals is a part of the small zoo James commissioned to be built, which featured camels, crocodiles, and an elephant, as well as aviaries of exotic birds in the space now called Birdcage Walk. The park was now not only a recreation in this former forest of an array of animals symbolic of dominion over lands far from Albion, but also a site to display the gentle and peaceful way royals can now "tame" the wilderness. The wild animals yield to the attractions of the court ladies instead of yielding to the hounds.

When discussing the royal gardens at this time, Elizabeth Eustis explains how monarchs' political views were reflected in their garden styles:

The age of absolute monarchy in Europe produced a correspondingly absolute garden style that characterized courtly gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries The absolute garden served not only as an amenity but also as a metaphor for supreme rank and power, "absolute" in its ultimate artistry, implied expanse, strict geometry, and especially in the authoritarian will and means of its owner.⁴⁵

⁴³ Alvin Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright: Theatre in the Stuart Court, 1603–1613*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 108, 72. As to relevance of animals, see *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Matthew Senior. *A Cultural History of Animals*, 4 (Oxford: Berg, 2011).

⁴⁴ Walford, "Westminster: St. James's Park" (see note 39).

⁴⁵ Elizabeth S. Eustis, "The Garden Print as Propaganda, 1573–1683," *The Changing Garden: Four Centuries of European and American Art*, ed. Betsy G. Fryberger (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 41–52; here 41.

Symbolizing the prosperity and beneficence of the monarch, displays of extravagance were mandatory.⁴⁶ James's garden in St. James Park was in this sense an absolute garden. What was once rural hunting space had become a work of art symbolizing James's status as a cultured man with refined tastes who could not only control the natural world, but could also recreate a better one, a garden full of contained animals, beautiful landscapes, and waterways, a garden of plenty, another Eden produced by the man who called himself the Sun King.

James I's son Charles I, the monarch whose vision of divine rights of kings ended on the execution block, was a great advocate of the arts. He favored a more Italianate garden, reflecting his greater appreciation of and patronage for the arts, especially Italian ones. Following the Florentine Humanists' steps, he made a museum of the garden at St. James Park, placing antique statues in the nooks or pathways of the garden. Charles I owned a great number of these antique or mock antique Roman sculptures including the gladiator which had earlier stood in the Earl of Pembroke's garden, over 250 having been listed in one inventory. The Mannerist garden, considered at that time a dominant image of royalist rule "with its statuary, its ordered walks, fountains, grottos and automata was easily adapted into the old inherited schema of the *hortus conclusus*, but was now overlaid with the gloss of late Renaissance allegory . . . of royalist persuasion."⁴⁷ At its height, "the rule of Charles and Henrietta was overtly lauded as heaven come down momentarily to earth," and their garden at St. James Park reflected in its refined sensibilities and harmonious beauty the richness of Eden.⁴⁸ However, this mannerist garden, once a deer park, now was, along with the doctrine it reflected, shattered by the Civil War that followed the execution of Charles. St. James Park was taken over by Parliament for use by London's citizens during the period of Puritan rule and the royal gardens were torn out.

After the Restoration in 1660, James I's grandson Charles II, exiled in France after the execution of his father, Charles I, took back ownership of St. James Park and had it redesigned to look like the more formal gardens he had seen at the palaces of the French royals. These gardens had been inspired by Cesare Ripa's *Iconology* (1593), which stated that pruned gardens were emblematic of political reform in that the need to trim excess growth on trees mirrored the need to contain fractious movements in society.⁴⁹ One change was to add the long, straight canal 2,560-ft. long and 125-ft. wide that ran down the center of the park. An avenue of

⁴⁶ Eustis, "The Garden Print" (see note 45), 45.

⁴⁷ Strong, *Renaissance Garden* (see note 37), 202.

⁴⁸ Strong, *Renaissance Garden* (see note 7), 200.

⁴⁹ Guilia Pacini, "A Culture of Trees: the Politics of Pruning and Felling in Late Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41.1 (2007): 1–15; here 4. Shakespeare echoes this theme in the gardener's speech in *Richard II* act 3, scene 4.

trees and walkways was placed on each side. Instead of holding massive hunts in his park, Charles II introduced the game *Pelle Melle* from France, a lawn game played on a long fenced court in which players used mallets to hit balls through hoops, leading to the names *Pall Mall* and *The Mall* used to describe the area today.⁵⁰

The king and his courtiers were often seen playing the game, and the diarist Samuel Pepys tells us that he first saw the game when the Duke of York played there in the park in April 1661. Pepys could see the Duke playing in the park because Charles II took the remarkable step of opening up the no longer exclusive royal park to the public. "We are told [Charles II] would sit for hours on the benches in the walk, amusing himself with some tame ducks and his dogs, amidst a crowd of people, with whom he would talk and joke."⁵¹ Among other activities, Charles II could now entertain his mistresses such as Nell Gwyn in the secluded arbors within the park, as we know from the encounter recorded in a 1671 diary entry of John Evelyn.⁵²

Much of our information about the use of St. James Park by Charles II and James II comes from the remarkable diary kept by Samuel Pepys between 1660 and 1669 mentioned above. As Clerk of the Acts to the Navy Board during the reign of Charles II and then as Secretary for Naval Affairs under James II, Pepys interacted with everyone in London, from the lowest dockhands, to the king and his family. As a fan of gardens both in London and at great houses outside of the city, he often remarked that time spent in a garden gave him the greatest pleasure possible. The early modern garden for Pepys and his contemporaries was a place in which to walk—unlike the European ones that they criticized for overdoing the use of pots, statues, and flowers, which spoil the walk—and during these walks much business was conducted, private and public business. In his entry for July 18, 1664, for example, Pepys says that before going in to St. James to discuss the upcoming war between England and Holland with the Duke of York, he and Sir George Carteret, Treasurer of the Navy and Vice-Chamberlain of the King's Household, "did talk together in the parke about my Lord Chancellors business of the timber. . . . And plots now with me how we may serve my Lord [Sandwich]—which I am mightily glad of and I hope together we may do it."⁵³

⁵⁰ "The Royal Parks," London's Personal Space. St. James Park. <http://www.royalparks.gov.uk/> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

⁵¹ Walford, "Westminster: St. James's Park" (see note 39).

⁵² John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 2. Ed. William Bray (New York and London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 63. See: <http://www.archive.org/stream/diaryofjohnely02eveliala#page/n11/mode/2up> (last accessed on Oct. 14, 2011).

⁵³ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 5, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 212.

Although Pepys's descriptions of his encounters with Charles II in the park are written from his own perspective, we can see the nature of the king's activities, too. In the spring of 1665, we watch the comic scene of Pepys at the park with his wife avoiding being seen by the king when he should be working: "So by coach with my wife and Mercer to the park; but the king being there, and I nowadays being doubtful of being seen in any pleasure, did part from the Tour, and away out of the park to Knightsbridge. . . ."⁵⁴ Three years later, after Pepys has made an eloquent speech defending the Naval Board before the House of Commons, he is quite happy to find the king and duke walking in the park:

and by and by overtaking the King, the King and Duke of York came to me both, and he said, "Mr. Pepys, I am very glad of your success yesterday"; and fell to talk of my well speaking; and many of the Lords there . . . and others, Parliament[-men] there about the King, did say that they never heard such a speech in their lives delivered in that manner"⁵⁵

The only deer-taking in this former deer park is described by Pepys as a prank by two young aristocrats:

This day for a wager before the King, my Lords of Castlehaven and Aran (a son of my Lord of Ormonds), they two alone did run down and kill a stout Bucke in St. James parke."⁵⁶

Although both Charles II and James II do hunt elsewhere, Pepys and his fellow businessmen are not impressed by this royal activity. Numerous times he records that he has gone to the palace to conduct work with the Lord High Admiral, the duke, only to find that the Duke of York, and frequently Charles II, too, were out hunting. In his entry for November 28, 1666, Pepys complains that he had gone "to Whitehall, where, though it blows hard and rains hard, yet the Duke of York is gone a-hunting. We therefore lost our labour, and so back again."⁵⁷

Three months earlier Pepys had found the Duke at St. James Palace with several patches on his nose and around his right eye from an injury during a hunting outing when a tree branch had struck him in the face. Pepys records that they can do little business with him now because "the want of money being such as leaves us little to do but to answer complaints of the want thereof, . . . the representing of our wants of money being now become useless."⁵⁸ In an earlier entry, Pepys and John Creed, another naval administrator, walk in St. James park a long time

⁵⁴ Samuel Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 485.

⁵⁵ Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys* (see note 54), 886.

⁵⁶ Pepys, *The Diary*, 5 (see note 54), 239.

⁵⁷ Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys* (see note 54), 697.

⁵⁸ Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys* (see note 54), 650.

waiting for the Duke to come home from hunting only to wait more once he gets back because he has to change, "he having in his hunting, rather then go about, light [alighted] and led his horse through a River up to his breast, and came so home."⁵⁹

The future king's love of hunting seems to Pepys just another obstacle to his attending to affairs of the state. After another walk in the garden, this one accompanied by the king and duke, who, after asking Pepys questions about naval business, then linger a great while to laugh at a goose and gander mating, Pepys and an M.P. named Colonel Reames stay to walk the garden to lament the affairs of the country: "We . . . see nothing done like men like to do well while the King minds his pleasures so much."⁶⁰ During another walk, Pepys and Captain George Cocke, a naval contractor, discuss the poor government of the country with the "King himself minding nothing but his ease."⁶¹ Although hunting is not specifically mentioned in these conversations, it would surely have been one of these wasteful pleasures lamented by prominent Londoners during the late stages of the Stuarts' reign. These relatively serious-minded gentlemen undertake discussions of state business while exercising their new rights to enjoy leisure in an open but secure royal space, now providing them privacy as it had for royals for several centuries.

In a study of nationalism and early modern England, Liah Greenfeld discusses the slow but perceptible changes in which noble birth was losing importance and society was moving toward "an aristocracy of ability and merit."⁶² Although still supporting an active role for the monarchy, political thought in the early modern period also embraced "tendency toward equality of condition among different social strata" that we see reflected in the changes in royal space.⁶³ In this early modern English society, with its humanist educated population, including an especially large number of lawyers, its very active print culture, and a large wealthy merchant and banking class, the excesses of these Stuart monarchs and their neglect of government, it has been argued, help shift the site of authority from the monarch to the gentleman. In Alastair Fowler's words, "the chivalric hero was replaced by a new civil ideal, the 'gentleman.'"⁶⁴ In his study of the connection between civic truth and scientific truth in seventeenth-century England, Steven

⁵⁹ Pepys, *The Diary* (see note 54), 289.

⁶⁰ Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys* (see note 54), 727.

⁶¹ Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys* (see note 54), 520.

⁶² Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 36.

⁶³ Greenfeld, *Nationalism* (see note 62), 47.

⁶⁴ Alastair Fowler, "Georgic and Pastoral: Laws of Genre in the Seventeenth Century," *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 81–88; here 87.

Shapin explains that the qualities attributed to gentlemen were based on “the concept and practice of truth” contained within “the heart of traditional honor culture.” In his most notable features, the gentleman was said to embody civility: credibility, reliability, truth, and disinterested actions.⁶⁵ Pepys and his fellow gentlemen such as the founding members of the Royal Society believe that they have a better understanding of the running of the government than the king has and, thus, in a metonymic sense, have equal stature in St. James Park.

If we turn from the concerns of diary writers like Pepys to look at the social views represented on stage by the Reformation dramatists, plays such as James Shirley’s *Hyde Park* and William Congreve’s *The Way of the World* show the changes in moral and political authority that are reflected in the use of royal space at the center of this analysis. Much of *The Way of the World*, in fact, takes place within St. James Park, and the mannerisms of those who walk there are sharply satirized. There is much talk about how to recognize a “gentleman,” the figure who is supposed to be the new civic ideal. In these plays, however, the gentlemen talk of walking in the park to tease or flirt with women, and the women go to meet anyone except their husbands. Although the playwrights do not include them in their scenes, the king and his women, sometimes the queen and sometimes a mistress, who are also often seen walking in this same public space, engaging in the same behaviors as his subjects, appear to differ little from the other park goers. The London parks were central to the Restoration plays of Etherege, Shadwell, Wycherley, Pix, Congreve, Centlivre, and others, according to Cynthia Wall, because they offered an elite audience during the immediate distresses of late Stuart London, “a retreat into the *known*, the secure, the green spaces of uninterrupted social life.”⁶⁶

The Restoration stage’s preoccupation with the manners of the gentleman and his women found a perfect backdrop in these spaces that represent at once a lessening of old hierarchical structures and the rise of the modern state. This was, in fact, the same period, from James Shirley’s *Hyde Park* in 1632 to George Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* in 1676, in which the parks underwent a set of transformations mirroring that of the country as a whole, as they were seized by the Parliamentary forces under Cromwell, used as public spaces unassociated with leisure or beauty, and then restored to parkland in a whole new style. “The King’s walks and arbors were a weapon in a broader political struggle; there too the

⁶⁵ Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 67 and 238. In *Two Treatises of Government*, John Locke established the rights, abilities, and obligations of citizens to participate in government at this time. See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988).

⁶⁶ David Roberts, “Caesar’ Gift: Playing the Park in the Late Seventeenth Century,” *English Literary History* 71.1 (2004): 115–39; here 117.

freedom of recreation had been established by royal order, allowing the upwardly mobile to walk abroad as well as anyone else; there too new-planted orchards would come to be recognized as symbols of political vindication. . . ."⁶⁷

After this point in time, both landowners and kings had to take on another responsibility: the responsibility of managing nature, not just to project an image or to promote leisure, but also to provide for the careful management of state resources.⁶⁸ The whole concept of land is, thus, redefined as a valuable resource to provide wood and other goods necessary to the modern state and the responsibility for maintaining these lands belonged to both the crown and its citizens.

As argued throughout this study, royal rural space can serve as a useful metaphor for the changing English state, which shifts "from the protection of the interests, and the territory, of the Monarch in Norman England to the fiscal-institutional management of the nation and the resources of the Crown in Hanoverian England."⁶⁹ The late Stuart monarch might seek to avoid the laborious duties of overseeing royal courts and ambitious courtiers, maintaining an equilibrium with a fractious Parliament, appeasing adherents of conflicting religious views, increasing England's prestige and influence in European affairs, and securing the funds to achieve all of this; but retreating on horseback into large private forests for weeks or months at a time was simply not possible anymore. At best he might settle for short walk in St. James Park.

⁶⁷ Roberts, "Caesar's Gift" (see note 66), 122.

⁶⁸ See a discussion of this in Pacini, "A Culture of Trees" (see note 49), 3.

⁶⁹ Carl J. Griffin, "More-than-Human-Histories and the Failure of Grand State Schemes: Sylviculture in the New Forest, England," *Cultural Geographies* 17.4 (2010): 451–72; here 454.

Chapter 11

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The Significance of Rural Space in *Guillaume de Palerne*

The Old French romance *Guillaume de Palerne*,¹ preserved in a single ms, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 6565, was composed by an anonymous poet who probably lived and worked in and around Picardy and the Ile de France.² The poet dedicates his work to “la contesse Yolent,/La boine dame, la loial” (the Countess Yolande, the good and true lady (vv. 9656–57), identified as Yolande, Countess of Hainaut and aunt of Isabelle, first wife of King Philippe Auguste of France, who seems to have lived a magnificent 92 years from 1131–1223.³ *Guillaume de Palerne* dates from around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,⁴ and thus forms part of the corpus of “second generation” verse romances, written in the decades following poets such as Chrétien de Troyes or the anonymous poet of *Partonopeus*

¹ There are two editions of this romance: *Guillaume de Palerne publié d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal à Paris* ed. by H. Michelant. Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Firmin Didot et compagnie, 1876); and *Guillaume de Palerne, Roman du XIII^e siècle*, ed. by Alexandre Micha. Textes littéraires français, 384 (Geneva: Droz, 1990). All quotations in this chapter are to the second of these editions.

² See Micha, *Guillaume de Palerne* (see note 1), 18.

³ See Anthime Fourier, “La ‘Contesse Yolent’ de *Guillaume de Palerne*,” *Etudes de langue et de littérature du moyen âge, offertes à Félix Lecoy par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris: Champion, 1973), 115–23; Charles W. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werwolf: A Literary-Historical Study of “Guillaume de Palerne”*. University of Toronto Department of English, Studies and Texts, 8 (Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1960), 31–38; Micha, *Guillaume de Palerne* (see note 1), 23.

⁴ The dating of *Guillaume de Palerne* remains only approximate. References to contemporary events in the 1190s which can be discerned in the text are listed by Charles W. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werwolf* (see note 3), 141. A more restricted date range of 1194–1197 is suggested by F. M. Warren, “The Works of Jean Renart, Poet, and Their Relation to *Galeran de Bretagne*,” *Modern Language Notes* 23 (1908): 69–73, 97–100; here 97. A later *terminus ad quem* of the early 1220s is suggested by Anthime Fourier, “La ‘Contesse Yolent’ de *Guillaume de Palerne* (see note 3). Micha accepts the broad range of mid 1190s–early 1220s; Micha, *Guillaume de Palerne* (see note 1), 23.

de Blois, who brought verse romance in France to the forefront of literary activity. The romance tells the story of the abduction of the eponymous young hero from Palermo by a werewolf, his discovery by the Emperor of Rome, his falling in love and elopement with the Emperor's daughter Melior (aided by the werewolf) and his eventual return home and recognition by his mother, alongside the revelation of the werewolf's true identity. It is difficult to judge the reception of the work in the Middle Ages, since only one manuscript survives.⁵ It clearly draws on the popular theme of the werewolf and represents a rewriting of Marie de France's *Bisclavret*; it may well in turn have influenced the early-thirteenth-century werewolf story the *Lai de Melion*,⁶ itself also a derivative of *Bisclavret*.⁷ *Guillaume* also clearly influenced the first segment of the mid-thirteenth-century romance, *Floriant et Florete*,⁸ and K. V. Sinclair suggests that it may be one of the sources for the fourteenth-century French epic *Tristan de Nanteuil*.⁹ Like many other French romances, *Guillaume* was translated into Middle English in the mid fourteenth century, and prose versions in English and in French survive from the early-mid

⁵ There is a sculpture on one of the capitals of the Benedictine cloister of Monreale Cathedral in Palermo which bears strong resemblance to the story of *Guillaume de Palerne*. Since these sculptures date from around 1174–1189, they would appear to predate our romance, but they may perhaps offer evidence of an earlier version of the story circulating prior to the end of the twelfth century. See Charles W. Dunn, "Guillaume de Palerne and a Monreale Sculpture," *Mediaeval Studies* 10 (1948): 215–16.

⁶ For an overview of discussions on the relationships between werewolf tales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see the introduction to Amanda Hopkins, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werewolf Lays* (Liverpool: Liverpool Online Series, 2005). See online at: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/soclas/los/Werewolf.pdf> (last accessed on 12th October 2011); here Introduction, 7–50; Leslie A. Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2008), 90–126; here 90–92. Christine Ferlampin-Acher notes, however, that "on ne relève aucune reprise précise de *Bisclavret* ou *Melion*" (there is no discernible exact reference to *Bisclavret* or *Melion*). See Christine Ferlampin-Acher "Guillaume de Palerne: une parodie?" *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 15 (2008): 59–71; here 61.

⁷ The general critical view is that *Melion* draws upon *Guillaume*: see, for example, Hopkins *Melion and Biclarel* (see note 6), 21; Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3, 9–10. However, given the likely chronological proximity of the two texts—Prudence Tobin dates *Melion* to somewhere between 1190 and 1204—I would suggest that this still an open question, and that the influence might be in either direction. See Prudence Mary O'Hara Tobin, "L'Élément breton et les lais anonymes," *Mélanges de langue et littérature françaises du Moyen Age offerts à Charles Foulon*, II. Marche Romane, 30 (*Mediaevalia*, 80) (1980), 277–86; here 291–92. See further discussion on this below.

⁸ See Irene Pettit McKeehan, "Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval 'Best Seller'," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 41 (1926): 785–809. McKeehan believes that the two works stem from a common ancestor; here, 790. This assertion is supported, if slightly nuanced, by Sara Sturm-Maddox, "Arthurian Evasions: The End(s) of Fiction in *Floriant et Florete*," *"Por le soie amisté": Essays in Honor of Norris J. Lacy*, ed. Keith Busby and Catherine M. Jones. Faux Titre, 183 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 475–89.

⁹ K. V. Sinclair, "Guillaume de Palerne, a Source for *Tristan de Nanteuil*," *Mediaeval Studies* 25 (1963): 362–66.

sixteenth century.¹⁰ In recent times, however, *Guillaume de Palerne*, like many other “second generation” romances has been relatively neglected by critics, although thanks largely to the work of Leslie Sconduto,¹¹ there has been a mini renaissance of interest in *Guillaume* in the last ten to fifteen years.¹² The text has been the subject of one full-length critical study, that of Charles Dunn¹³; however, this is against a background of previous neglect of the text, apart from the study by Irene McKeehan, who argued strongly for the intrinsic interest of this romance.¹⁴ Indeed McKeehan and Dunn are noticeable for their focus upon *Guillaume de Palerne* as a work worthy of study in its own right, rather than concentrating upon this primarily as an example of a werewolf tale.

My aim in this chapter is to open up the romance in some different directions than those taken by earlier critics by looking at the way it is structured around notions of space, with particular emphasis on the use of rural spaces. This analysis will focus, firstly, on the role of these spaces within the narrative structure of the romance itself; then, secondly, upon the ways in which these spaces link *Guillaume de Palerne* into a network of intertextual dialogues with other romances. In doing this, the work of Dunn and Fourrier on the historical context of the work will be combined with more recent scholarship on the practice of rewriting as a key facet of the compositional approach and practice of poets at this time.¹⁵ In this way I will aim to show how the poet of *Guillaume de Palerne* indulges in a playful rewriting of others—and indeed his own—themes and motifs in order to suggest that,

¹⁰ See the summary of the various versions of *Guillaume de Palerne* in Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 2–7.

¹¹ Leslie A. Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (see note 6); “Rewriting the Werewolf in *Guillaume de Palerne*,” *Cygne: Bulletin of the International Marie de France Society* 6 (2000): 23–35; “Blurred and Shifting Identities: The Werewolf as Other in *Guillaume de Palerne*,” *Romance Languages Annual* 11 (1999): 121–26.

¹² Other important recent works include Alain Corbellari, “Onirisme et bestialité: *Le Roman de Guillaume de Palerne*,” *Neophilologus* 86 (2002): 353–62; Hans-Erich Keller “Literary Patronage in the Time of Philip Augustus— *The Spirit of the Court*, ed. by Glyn Burgess and Robert Taylor (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 1985), 196–207; Cristina Noacco, “La Dé-mesure du loup-garou: un instrument de connaissance,” *Revue des Langues Romanes* 111 (2007): 31–50; Randy P. Schiff, “Cross-Channel Becomings—Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*,” *Exemplaria* 21 (2009): 418–38.

¹³ Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3).

¹⁴ Irene Pettit McKeehan, “*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval ‘Best Seller’” (see note 8).

¹⁵ The key studies in this field are Douglas Kelly’s, *The Art of Medieval French Romance* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), and *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance*, *Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, 97 (Leiden: Brill 1999). I will also draw upon the notion of the fusion of different narrative models, initially suggested by Matilda Bruckner in her study of *Partonopeus de Blois*, “From Genealogy to Romance and Continuation in the Fabulous History of *Partonopeus de Blois*,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 33 (1993): 27–39; this approach has been developed more fully in the recent study of the same romance by Penny Eley, “*Partonopeus de Blois*”: *Romance in the Making*. Gallica 21 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2011).

although this is a work which may have been neglected in the past, it one which is well worth our further attention.

As one can see from the following summary of the plot of *Guillaume de Palerne*, this is a 'courtly' narrative in which a significant amount of space is dedicated to action/episodes that take place away from the world of the court, and one in which the principal protagonists move across a wide geographical range, comprising many different types of space:

Guillaume is the son of King Embrons of Apulia and his queen, Felise. The King's brother devises a plot to murder Guillaume and his father and seize the throne; to this end he bribes the boy's nurses to poison him. Just before this plan can be carried out, the four-year-old Guillaume is taken by a werewolf whilst he is playing in his father's park where the family are taking their leisure. The wolf carries off the child, evading all attempts by the King's men to catch him, reaches the Straits of Messina and swims across, still carrying the boy. He continues northward, reaching a large forest near Rome; here the child is discovered by a cowherd. He and his wife raise him as their own son. The poet reveals that the werewolf is actually Alphonse, son of the King of Spain, who has been cursed by his stepmother.

Seven years later, the Emperor of Rome is hunting in the forest and is separated from his hunting party during the pursuit of a boar. He sees a wolf in pursuit of a deer and, following it, comes upon Guillaume; he is immediately struck by the child's beauty. Further inquiry reveals that he is not the real son of the cowherd but a foundling. The Emperor persuades the cowherd to allow him to take the boy back to court in Rome, since he is clearly of noble birth.

In Rome, the Emperor gives Guillaume as a companion to his daughter, Melior, and he is brought up as a young aristocrat. When he reaches the age of fourteen, he is handsome and well mannered. Melior then starts to be troubled by love pangs for the youth and her suffering is noticed by her cousin and confidante, Alixandrine, who promises to try and find a remedy. Meanwhile Guillaume is also prey to love sickness for Melior and takes to spending his days beneath an apple tree in the Emperor's orchard, from where he can observe Melior's room. Finally, Melior and Alixandrine find him here as they take their walk in the orchard and the two eventually make a mutual declaration of love.

News then comes to Rome that the Duke of Saxony has invaded imperial lands. Guillaume petitions the Emperor to be made a knight so that he can join in the defense, and the Emperor readily agrees. Guillaume performs marvelously in the battle, defeating the Duke's nephew and routing the Saxon forces. No sooner has he returned in triumph to Rome, however, than an envoy comes from Constantinople, requesting the hand of Melior for the son of the Emperor of

Greece. The proposal is accepted by Melior's father, to the dismay of the two lovers, who decide to flee together.

Aided by Alixandrine, Guillaume and Melior sew themselves into the hides of two white bears which have been killed by huntsmen. They slip into the park surrounding the palace and from there out into the forest beyond; however, unbeknownst to them, they are observed by a young Greek who had been in the park. When the flight of the lovers is discovered, news is sent out to be on the lookout for two white bears.

The two young lovers find themselves out in the wild; as soon as they have left the palace, however, the werewolf picks up their trail and follows them. Guillaume and Melior prove unable to fend for themselves in the wild, and are resigned to eating wild shoots and berries, but the werewolf forages for them: he steals a joint of cooked meat from a peasant and a barrel of wine from a priest. Similar provision is made each day as the werewolf guides them south towards Apulia, Guillaume's home land.

En route they come to Benevento where there are stone quarries. The young lovers, tired from their journey, decide to sleep in one of the quarry caves. They are spotted by the quarry workers, who have heard the news of the two white bears; they send a messenger back to Benevento to alert the town governor and bring help. The imminent capture of the lovers is averted by the werewolf who appears, seizes the twelve-year-old son of the governor and runs off with him to draw away the workers. Guillaume and Melior escape from the cave, and, once they are safe, the werewolf releases the governor's son unharmed.

Guillaume and Melior, alone again in the wild, overhear two peasants referring to the pursuit of the two white bears and realize their disguise has been recognized. Once again the werewolf comes to their rescue, bringing in first a stag and then a hind, so that they can use the hides for a new camouflage.

Meanwhile, we learn that in Apulia King Embrons is dead and Queen Felise in Palermo is being besieged by the King of Spain who wishes to have the hand of her daughter, Florence, for his son, Brandin. The queen is in dire straits and has sent to her father, the Emperor of Greece for help, which has so far not materialized.

Guillaume and Melior reach Reggio; the werewolf indicates to them that they should board a ship which is to cross the Straits of Messina. They hide on board and, when they reach the other side the wolf leaps into the sea to distract the crew so that the lovers can slip off unseen. The wolf is attacked by the sailors and repeatedly nearly drowns. Guillaume and Melior reach Palermo and take refuge in the orchard, now laid waste by the foraging Spanish army. The Queen has a dream in which two deer and a wolf come to her rescue; when she catches sight of Guillaume and Melior in the orchard, she remembers the dream and approaches them, discovering that beneath the hides are two young people.

Guillaume and Melior are brought into the palace and Guillaume immediately requests arms so that he can defend the kingdom. Under his leadership, the Spanish are defeated; as peace is being negotiated, the werewolf leaps into the hall and makes obeisance to the King of Spain, licking his feet. The King realizes this is his long lost son Alphonse and summons his wife to lift the spell. A triple wedding follows: Guillaume and Melior are united alongside Alphonse and Florence, and Alixandrine and Brandin. Guillaume succeeds to his lands in Palermo, and becomes Emperor of Rome also, when Melior's father dies. Alphonse succeeds his father as King of Spain.

We thus find key elements of the narrative taking place away from the world of the court: the raising of the hero in the forest and the elopement of the lovers from Rome, to give the two most significant examples. Together those two episodes constitute approximately 2000 lines, equivalent to some twenty percent of the total of the romance. It is also apparent that there are very precise and accurate references to geographical locations—for example, Benevento, Reggio and the Straits of Messina—which are juxtaposed with more fantastic elements derived from the Breton-type tradition of the *merveilleux*. Is this focus on space, and in particular on exterior space away from the court, simply a logical consequence of the combination of the two story models which underlie *Guillaume de Palerne*—the foundling story and the werewolf tale—or is it part of a more deliberate compositional technique?

An analysis of the types of spaces in *Guillaume de Palerne* shows that they do indeed form a significant pattern. The world of the court is predominantly located in internal spaces, such as the courts at Rome or Palermo; this world only moves into external spaces when military conflicts occur such as those between Rome and the Saxons, or when the Spanish besiege Palermo. As such, this is no different from the use of space to be found in most romance or epic texts. Then we have the world which is definitely beyond the courtly sphere, and which we find in what can be termed “wild” spaces; these comprise the forest near Rome and the long stretches of land between Rome and Palermo. But, most interestingly, there is also a series of intermediate spaces, which lie between the court and the wild spaces beyond and make take on characteristics belonging to either type of space; these are three *vergiers*, located in Palermo, Rome and returning to the first one in Palermo.

The term *vergier* in Old French denotes not just an orchard as its Modern French equivalent does, but also covers the wider sense of a park, often with deer in it; such enclosures provided important food and other resources to large estates in the Middle Ages. These courtly, wild and intermediate spaces interlock to form a structure to the narrative of *Guillaume de Palerne*. There are three courtly locations, arranged in a cycle—Palermo, to Rome and back; then there are three distinct wild

spaces—the forest near Rome, the moorland beyond Rome and Palermo, and the quarry at Benevento, which constitutes a particular instance of space within the larger moorland location. These wild spaces lie between the courtly spaces, so that the narrative traverses them as it moves in the broad overall cycle of Palermo-Rome-Palermo. So, moving from Palermo to Rome, we encounter the forest in which Guillaume is raised; moving from Rome to Palermo, the lovers must cross a large, uncultivated area away from civilization, with a separate episode in the specific area of Benevento. The intermediate spaces are positioned between the court locations and the wild spaces. Guillaume moves through these intermediate spaces three times, the first two on a journey away from the court and towards the wild, and the third time, on the return journey back to Palermo and the world of the court at the close; significantly he encounters the werewolf either in these intermediate spaces, or shortly after leaving them, and has the wolf as his companion/protector in his time in the wild spaces.

The intermediate space of the *vergier* thus occupies a particular prominence in a clear narrative pattern constructed from the different types of spaces in *Guillaume de Palerne*. But there is a further correlation between what happens in these spaces and the content of the narrative. The intermediate spaces are all also *loci* of transformation—characters undergo some kind of metamorphosis before entering these spaces. So, there are three transformations: Alphonse is turned into a werewolf by his stepmother, prior to entering the *vergier* where he rescues the infant Guillaume; Guillaume and Melior disguise themselves as animals by donning the skins, firstly, of two white bears and, secondly, of two deer before entering, first, the *vergier* in Rome and, secondly, the one in Palermo; and finally Guillaume's mother adopts the pose and behavior, if not the skin of a deer, so that she can approach the lovers in the *vergier* at Palermo, leading to their retransformation back into human form, and subsequently also that of the werewolf Alphonse.

So, there is a clear structural significance to the different types of space in *Guillaume de Palerne*. The spaces constitute a kind of architectural infrastructure to the narrative, and they seem to align in some ways with the themes of metamorphosis and identity that are clearly at the heart of this romance. These are notions to which we will return later, but for now I wish to focus more closely on the particular nature of the rural spaces in *Guillaume de Palerne* in order to investigate their further significance in the light of the second theme of this paper, that of the sources of *Guillaume de Palerne*, and their rewriting and recombination by the anonymous poet.

The werewolf element of *Guillaume de Palerne* is usually taken to be a rewriting of popular motifs seen most notably in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*, but which

have a long tradition before the Middle Ages.¹⁶ The parallel between the noble werewolf of Marie's *lai*, transformed by his spiteful wife but retaining his courtliness beneath his beast's shape and Alphonse, transformed by a wicked stepmother yet acting at all times in the interests of justice and the protection of the weak, is clear to see. By contrast, the source of the foundling element of *Guillaume de Palerne* is less easy to identify. Both Dunn and McKeehan link this to the folklore model of the Fair Unknown, and Dunn provides an exhaustive study of the various manifestations of this story form in Celtic, Latin and Eastern traditions.¹⁷ He concludes that *Guillaume* derives from a Romulus story model, which obviously also lies behind the famous legend of Romulus and Remus and the founding of Rome.

This links to one source chronologically close to *Guillaume de Palerne*, the very popular Old French *roman d'antiquité*, *Le Roman d'Enéas*, written in around 1160;¹⁸ and there is evidence of the *Guillaume* poet linking his own work to this famous legend. Firstly, the werewolf, having abducted the child Guillaume, arrives near Rome. This is geographically rather implausible, given he has traveled all the way from Palermo, carrying a four-year-old boy all the way; and there is no other necessity in the plot to locate the Emperor who is to find the hero in this particular part of Italy. Secondly, the wolf does everything necessary to care and provide for the child, except suckle it; the idea of the suckling wolf mother is, however, retained in the description of the wolf curling round the child to protect him in a pose reminiscent of a nursing she-wolf:

La nuit le couche joste soi
Li leus garous le fil le roi,
L'acole de ses .IIII. piés. (vv. 181–83)

[At night the werewolf lay down with the King's son next to him, and tucked his four paws all around him.]

Thirdly, when the child is finally spotted by the cowherd, the poet tells us he is hiding in a clump of laurels:

¹⁶ See Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3) and Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (see note 6). Editor's note: See also Keith Roberts, "Eine kleine Kulturgeschichte des Werwolfs," *Dämonen, Monster, Fabelwesen*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich. *Mittelalter Mythen*, 2 (St. Gallen: UVK Fachverlag für Wissenschaft und Studium, 1 999), 565–81; Stephen O. Gloeck, "Wolf [*Canis lupus*] and Werewolf," *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs*, ed. Carl Lindahl, John McNamara, and John Lindow, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, and Oxford: CLO, 2000), 1057–61.

¹⁷ Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 86–111.

¹⁸ For the dating of *Le Roman d'Enéas* see the Introduction to *Le Roman d'Enéas, édition critique d'après le manuscrit B.N. fr. 60*, ed. and trans. by Aimé Petit. *Lettres Gothiques* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997), 7, 9.

Quant li vachiers entent l'enfant,
 Cele part est alés courant,
 Ot le plorer en la loriere,
 Merveille soi de grant manière. (vv. 203–06)

[When the cowherd heard the child, he ran over in that direction; he heard him crying in the laurels and was greatly amazed.]

Here again, there is no narrative motivation or necessity of rhyme (“manière” is not a difficult word to rhyme) that would determine the choice of laurel as the hiding place for the foundling child; but it does function as a means both of alerting the audience to the legend of Rome, and marks the future crowning of Guillaume as Emperor of Rome at the end of the story.¹⁹ Indeed, the Roman link with the imperial laurel of v. 205 is reiterated at v. 4901, when Guillaume and Melior take refuge in the *vergier* of Palermo: “Illuec ensamble se dormoient/Sos .I. lorier, en .I. prael” (They were sleeping together beneath a laurel in a meadow, vv. 4901–02). This occurs at the start of the *dénouement* of the tale which will see Guillaume eventually crowned Emperor of Rome through his marriage to Melior, daughter of the current Emperor.

But it is also possible to find other parallels in the existing Old French romance tradition upon which the poet appears to have drawn for the foundling element of his romance. These are the romances *Le Conte du Graal* by Chrétien de Troyes²⁰ and *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, attributed to a poet who also calls himself Chrétien.²¹ The scene in which the Emperor discovers Guillaume shares many common features with the scene in which Perceval first encounters knights in the Gaste Forest of *Le Conte du Graal*. Firstly, the Emperor is struck by the astonishing beauty of Guillaume:

L'enfant regarde, s'arresta,
 A grant merveille se seigna
 De sa biauté, de sa samblance
 Et de sa noble contenance:
 Merveille soi qui il puet estre,
 Ne de quel gent ne de quel estre,
 Cuide chose faëe soit. (vv. 415–23)

¹⁹ I am grateful to my colleague, Professor Penny Eley, for her kind contribution of this particular observation.

²⁰ Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Conte du Graal*, in *Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. by Félix Lecoy, volumes 5–6. Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1972).

²¹ Chrétien, *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, ed. by A. J. Holden. Textes littéraires français, 360 (Geneva: Droz 1988). The editor refers to the long debate as to the attribution of this text to the poet Chrétien de Troyes in his foreword to the edition and in the Introduction, 31–35. The poet simply refers to himself as “Chrestiens” in the opening line of his romance, and Holden concludes that it is safest to keep simply to this name and not risk identifying it any more specifically with Chrétien de Troyes.

[The Emperor stopped and looked at the child; he crossed himself in amazement at his beauty, his appearance and countenance. He wondered who he could be, from what people, or what he was: he thought he must be some being from another world.]

Here, the idea of Perceval mistaking the knights for angels in his encounter is rewritten as the Emperor mistaking Guillaume for a fairy being.²² The scene in *Guillaume de Palerne* continues with a series of questions, which again echo Perceval's questioning of the knights, but is reversed here with the Emperor trying to question Guillaume; and one of these questions in particular evokes Perceval as the Emperor asks, "Et cui fix estes vos?" (And whose son are you?), echoing Perceval's answer about his own name:

"Mes or te pri que tu m'anseignes
par quel non je t'apelerai.
– Sire, fet il, jel vos dirai.
J'ai non Biax filz. (vv. 342–45)

["But now I beg you to tell me by what name I should call you." "Sir", he answered, "I will tell you; I am called Fair Son."]

We begin to see the hallmarks of the *Guillaume* poet's approach to his source material: he reshapes the echoes of earlier texts into new forms and patterns in his own text. Christine Ferlampin-Acher observes that the grief and parting advice of Guillaume's adopted father, the cowherd, echo the farewell of Perceval's mother, but here the poet has reversed the gender of the parent, and made him an adoptive, rather than a biological relation.²³

In *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, itself a reworking of the legend of St. Eustace,²⁴ Guillaume, the King of England is ordered by God to renounce the life of this world and abandons his palace for life in the wild forest. Here his wife gives birth to twin sons and is separated from her husband. The boys are raised by merchants and named Lovel and Marin, because the first was found after being carried off by a wolf, the second on board a ship; eventually they run away together and are found by a forester who brings them to the King of Caithness, who recognises their

²² This echo recurs in a form closer to its original in *Le Conte du Graal* at v. 449, when Guillaume reports the arrival of the Emperor to his foster father: "'onques plus bel de lui ne vi.'" ('I never saw anyone more fair than he').

²³ See Christine Ferlampin-Acher "Guillaume de Palerne: une parodie?" (see note 6), 61; she also notes that the skill of the young Guillaume at hunting parallels that of the young Perceval. See further discussion on this point below, 11–12.

²⁴ In his study of *Guillaume de Palerne* as a source for *Tristan de Nanteuil*, K. V. Sinclair notes that the motif of a beast suckling an animal is common in tales of the Eustachius Cycle. K. V. Sinclair, "Guillaume de Palerne, a Source for *Tristan de Nanteuil*" (see note 9), 362. Although Christine Ferlampin Acher also notes the parallel, the links between *Guillaume de Palerne* and the Eustachius material remain to be explored in detail. See Christine Ferlampin-Acher "Guillaume de Palerne: une parodie?" (see note 6), 59.

nobility and has them trained and educated as young noblemen, and from here they are eventually reunited with their father and mother. In this story we again have a foundling carried away by a wolf, and we also have the contrast between the upbringing bestowed by a non-aristocrat upon a noble child, and the appropriate education at a royal court. Both of these are clearly visible in the cowherd's raising of Guillaume, although this figure proves rather more beneficent than the surly and churlish merchants who raise Lovel and Marin. There is also a specific echo of the torn pieces of fine cloth with which the twins of *Guillaume d'Angleterre* are found; in *Guillaume de Palerne* the Emperor asks the cowherd the rather odd question "'Mais or me di en quel ator/Estoit il quant tu le trouvas,/C'avoit vestu ne com fais dras'" ("Now tell me what he was wearing when you found him, and what sort of fabrics he was dressed in").²⁵ Again, there is no narrative necessity for this question; rather it seems to be there to draw attention to the poet's model for the scene.²⁶

The twins in *Guillaume d'Angleterre* refuse the training in trade which their merchant fathers propose, unlike Guillaume who adapts well to rural life, although even here, his noble birth shines through in his preference for certain skills and activities:

Em champ aloit li damoisai
 Avoec son père le vachier
 Qui molt l'amoit et tenoit chier.
 Bien set ja ses bestes garder,
 Chacier avant et retourner
 Et mener en millor paisson;
 De l'arc savoit plus que nus hom
 Berser et archoier et traire.
 La nuit quant a l'ostel repaire,
 Vient tos chargiés li damoisiax
 De lievres, de connins, d'oisiax
 Et de pertris et de faisans.
 Molt ert amés de tos enfans,
 Car quant ses oisiax avoit pris
 Por son deduit et por son pris
 Ses compaignons les donoit lues,
 Ja n'en retenist a son ues
 Desi que tot cil en avoient
 Qui en sa compaignie estoient. (vv. 362–80)

²⁵ For an analysis of the foundling and recognition *topoi* in *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, in particular the use of fabric as the recognition device, see the very interesting discussion in Monica L. Wright, *Weaving Narrative, Clothing in Twelfth-Century Romance*, Penn State Romance Studies (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 155–66.

²⁶ The question also echoes another of Marie de France's *Lais*, *Fresne*, in which twin girls are separated at birth and reunited through recognition of a rich cloth in which they are swaddled.

[The young man went out into the fields with his father the cowherd who loved him dearly and tenderly. He knew how to look after his cattle, how to drive them out, bring them back and lead them into new pasture. When it came to archery, he was better than anyone at hunting or drawing his bow. At night when he came back home, the young man would be laden with hares, rabbits and game birds, with partridges and pheasants. And he was popular with all the children because when he had taken birds for the pleasure of hunting and proving his skill, he would immediately give them away to his friends and would not keep any for himself until everyone else had had some.]²⁷

The generosity of the young Guillaume shines through in his distribution of his hunting spoils, a reworking of the disinclination of Lovel and Marin to engage in money-making mercantilism.

It is apparent, therefore, from a study of the two principal story models upon which *Guillaume de Palerne* is based, that the anonymous poet adopts a poetics of rewriting characterized by the fusing of two different story models, weaving into this basic formula references to other examples of the romance canon and the *lai* tradition which preceded his work. As he incorporates these references, they are reshaped to fit his new narrative pattern, but always in such a way that the original form is discernible. In this way, his rewriting functions almost as a self-reflexive commentary on the process of rewriting itself. We therefore need now to investigate other texts which may be rewritten, and to do so with particular reference to the rural spaces which we have seen are key to the architecture of the romance. In doing this, we will focus firstly upon one of the important criterial properties of the rural scenes, the poet's use of comedy, and, secondly we will examine two geographical problems that arise from the specific locations of the rural spaces.

The *Guillaume* poet has a deft hand at comedy, which he deploys to the most engaging effect during the telling of the long journey that Guillaume and Melior make from Rome to Palermo. During this time, they, as young aristocrats, are dependent upon the benevolent offices of the werewolf, to provide for and protect them.²⁸ The lovers are initially prepared to eat wild plants and fruits (vv. 3232–35),

²⁷ For a humorous variation on the notion of innate qualities of generosity in a young nobleman, see the romance *Octavian* in which the young hero impressively fails at merchant trading because he always seeks to give away what he has earned. *Octavian: altfranzösischer Roman nach der Oxforder Handschrift Bodl. Hatton 100*, ed. by Karl Vollmöller. *Altfranzösische Bibliothek*, 3 (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1883)

²⁸ Leslie Sconduto notes that Guillaume cannot simultaneously be lover and knight, the two opposite sides of his identity. When he is in the rural context, he is separated from his identity as knight, and therefore cannot but fail to act as provider/protector for himself and Melior. Leslie Sconduto, "Blurred and Shifting Identities" (see note 11), 121.

but the werewolf knows they need better sustenance and sets about securing it;²⁹ in a scene worthy of a *fabliau*,³⁰ he springs upon an unsuspecting *vilain*:

Garde u chemin, voit .I. vilain
 Qui portoit blanc pain et char cuite:
 Ja ert, s'il puet, d'aus .II. la luite.
 En .I. sachet l'ot estoïe,
 Si le portoit a sa maisnie.
 Li vilains vint et li lus saut;
 Cil voit la beste et crie en haut:
 "Aidiés, biau peres glorious!
 Hui me deffent, que cis garous
 De moi ocire n'ait poissance."
 Et li garous vers luis s'avance,
 As dens l'aert et saut d'encoste,
 Tres bien le tient par le hargote;
 Tot estendu le vilain rue,
 La viande li a tolue
 Que il portoit a sa maisnie.
 Mais se sa feme en ert irie,
 De ce n'ert gaires a la beste. (vv. 3256–73)

[The wolf lay in wait by the road until he saw a *vilain* carrying white bread and cooked meat; he will fight to secure both of these if he can. The *vilain* had secured the provisions in a small bag and was carrying them home. He came by and the wolf leapt out on him. When the *vilain* saw the animal, he cried out, "Help me, dear Father of Glory! Defend me now and keep this wolf from killing me!" And the wolf advanced upon him, leapt upon him from the side and grasped him in his teeth, gripping him firmly by his clothes. He threw the *vilain* full length on the ground, and stole the food which he was taking home. It was nothing to the wolf if the *vilain's* wife should be angry at her husband.]

Having secured food, the busy wolf then realizes that drink is also needed, so back he rushes to the road and leaps upon a clerk who is carrying a barrel of wine which he also delivers to the lovers (vv. 3331–50). This is then comically drunk straight from the barrel, since they have no cups (vv. 3366–68). These descriptions combine remarkably realistic details, such as the sack used to carry the peasant's provisions, the wolf's gripping of his clothes or the lack of drinking vessels, with the fantastic elements of a werewolf who is able to transport a barrel of wine safely

²⁹ The wolf has been a constant provider of food, nurturing and feeding the young Guillaume in the forest when he first rescued him. This contrasts with the lament of Queen Felise who fears that the wolf will eat her son: "'Or es a lou garoul peuteur'" ('Now you will be food for a werewolf'—v. 151.)

³⁰ Christine Ferlampin-Acher, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: une parodie?" (see note 6) observes the similarity between this scene and *Le Roman de Renart*, 62.

back to his charges.³¹ The image of the wolf as some kind of squire who must serve appropriate aristocratic provender to his lord and lady is also highly comical.

This comic incongruity which blends the strongly realistic with the clearly improbable is seen at its best in the scene at the quarry at Benevento. The two lovers reach Benevento on their journey south and the town is described in some detail:

Par .I matin ont esgardé,
Voient les tors d'une cité,
Les fermetés et les muraus,
Les aigles et les cercles haus,
Les eves et les pescheries;
Mais les forest lor sont faillies,
N'i voient se champaigne non.
Bounivens ot la cités non,
Si estoit l'apostoile lige
Fors que la souveraine justice
En estoit a l'empereor.
.....
Regardé ont les .I. grant tertre,
Jouste le mont a la costiere
Voient le blanc d'une quarriere.

(vv. 3881–91, 3896–98)

[They looked out one morning and saw the towers of a city, its fortifications and walls, the eagle and the high circus,³² the rivers and fishponds; but now they no longer had the cover of the forest and could see only fields. The city was called Benevento and it was a Papal fief, although sovereign justice was still maintained by the emperor. They looked to the side of a large hill, and near the hill, beside the river, they saw the white stone of a quarry.]

The detail is accurate, for Benevento was indeed papal territory in the late twelfth century, and had been since 1053 when it had “embraced papal lordship to escape Norman occupation.”³³ The reference to imperial jurisdiction in vv. 3890–91 may reflect a much more immediate political circumstance, that of the visit by Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI in 1191, during which he granted new privileges to the

³¹ The comedy of this scene is noted by Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf* (see note 6), 104.

³² The translation of “cercles haus” (v. 384) as “circus” is suggested by Tobler-Lommatzsch’s gloss in the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925–1976); see under the headword “cercle.” Dunn points out that Benevento does not have the remains of a circus, but an ancient theatre, to which the poet may be referring here, and there is also the possibility he had Trajan’s triumphal arch in mind. In any event, it is clear that the poet had detailed knowledge of Benevento and its surrounding area. See Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 81.

³³ Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992), 15.

city of Benevento.³⁴ The reference to marble quarries is also accurate and, even today, the area is still famous as a source of marble. The description of the caves and quarry workings also includes highly realistic details:

... venu sont a la quarriere
 Qui molt estoit grans et pleniére.
 Mainte grant gove i ot dedens
 Que faite i avoient les gens
 Quin avoient la pierre traite.
 Une en i ot novele faite
 Et prenoient tot de nouvel
 Cil de la vile le quarrel. (vv. 3905–12)

[... They came to the quarry which was large and contained much stone. There were many large tunnels inside it, which people had made as they extracted the stone. There was a new one which they had formed and from which the townspeople were now quarrying the stone.]

This realism is, however, abruptly juxtaposed with fantasy, for, when the lovers are discovered hiding in the quarry workings, the werewolf reappears just in time to save them from capture by the townsfolk. The werewolf's stratagem for distracting their pursuers involves leaping upon the town governor's twelve-year-old son and running off with him in his mouth. This is not just incredible; it is clearly impossible, and also extremely amusing. The comedy derives from the incongruity of the human beings who are so disastrously unable to keep themselves out of danger juxtaposed with the resourcefulness of werewolf who rescues them, as well as from the way in which this scene replays the rescue of Guillaume from the *vergier* at the start of the romance.

In that episode, the audience's credibility is stretched as they must accept the wolf's ability to carry a four-year-old child, swim the Straits of Messina which, even at their narrowest are nearly two miles across, and then travel all the way north to Rome; it is only the return to highly detailed realism once the wolf reaches the forest that enables the audience to suspend their disbelief at this point. But in Benevento, the move is in reverse, from realism to exaggerated fantasy, and disbelief can no longer be suspended. Indeed, this preposterous episode represents a challenge to the audience to reflect back to the earlier episode and question their own ability to accept unhesitatingly the narrative elements which the poet places before them.

³⁴ See Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 126–27. Dunn also points out that Henry had laid the area of Campania waste, as the French discovered when they arrived on the way back from the Third Crusade, some four months later. This may well be reflected in the descriptions of the ravages of war south of Rome which Guillaume and Melior encounter after their adventures in Benevento.

Comedy resulting from a different kind of incongruous juxtaposition, one which operates both literally and metatextually, is to be found at the start of the young lovers' journey from Rome. They make good their escape by sewing themselves into the skins of two white bears which they take from the kitchen. The poet devotes some considerable time to describing this stratagem, including the process by which they don their disguise:

[Alixandrine] a prise la menor pel.
 Par le commant au damoiseil
 Sor Melior l'a estendue;
 Ensi comme ele estoit vestue
 De ses garnemens les millors
 L'a encousue en la piau d'ors.
 Quant en la puel fu enfermee,
 Alixandrine a apelee:
 "Bele, que te samble de moi?
 – Dame, par Dieu le souverain roi,
 S'en ceste pel ne te savoie,
 Por .C. mars d'or ne t'atendroie,
 Si sables ors et fiere beste
 De cors, de membres et de teste."
 Après a prise l'autre pel;
 Par le commant au damoiseil
 A corroies longues et fors
 Li estendi desus le cors:
 Sor la robe qu'il ot vestue
 Li a la pel estroit cousue.
 Quant de la pel fu revestis
 Et bien fu ens laciés et mis,
 S'a apelé sa douce amie:
 "Bele, fait il, ne celés mie,
 Dites de moi que vos en samble.
 – Certes, sire li cuers me tramble,
 Quant vos esgart, si samblés fier.
 – Bele, pensons de l'exploitier."

(vv. 3073–100)

[Alixandrine took the smaller hide and, following the young man's command, she stretched it around Melior; when she was thus dressed in her best garments, Alixandrine sewed her into the bear skin. When she was enclosed in the hide, Melior called to Alixandrine, "Dear, how do you think I look?" "My lady, by God the sovereign king, if I didn't know you were in that skin, I wouldn't be expecting to see you for a hundred gold marks; your body, limbs and head are just like those of a bear or a fierce beast." Then Alixandrine took the second hide and, at the young man's command, stretched it around his body with long, strong thongs and she sewed the skin tightly over the clothes he was wearing. When he was clothed in the hide and was firmly laced up inside it, he called his beloved, "Dear", he said, "Tell me honestly, how

do you think I look?" "Indeed, sir, my heart trembles when I look at you, you look so fierce." "My dear, let us look to carry out our plan."]

The incongruity of Melior putting on the hide as if it were a new dress and the echo of an arming scene in the description of Guillaume donning his are amusing, as is their inappropriate and naive concern about their appearance; but the humor also draws attention to the juxtaposition of incongruous elements as the hides are specifically placed on top of the lovers' normal clothing (see vv. 3076–77 and 3091), such that it is covered, but not replaced. This is an odd detail, but one to which the poet returns later when Queen Felise realizes that the two deer who appear in her *vergier* are humans in disguise because she can see rich clothing underneath the skins which have shrunk in the heat (vv. 5094–101). The poet is at pains to suggest that the transformations of his hero and heroine are no more than skin deep, which invites us to reflect upon the nature of other transformations in the text.

There is indeed another transformation taking place in the description of the donning of the skins, and this involves the transformation or rewriting of another romance model. The fuss over the lovers' appearance is a reworking of a scene which occurs at the end of one very important version of the earlier twelfth-century romance *Partonopeus de Blois*, that preserved in manuscript A.³⁵ This, the earliest version of the romance, ends with a triple wedding, including that of the hero and heroine. The marriage scene is prefaced by a delightful description of the three women preparing their toilette and fussing about the folds of their dresses and set of their hair; the scene closes with one of the lesser ladies asking for an opinion about her appearance from one of the attendants:

"Que t'en samble, se Dex t'ament?
 – Dame n'i sai tant esgarder
 Que plus i voie a amender.
 Certes se je l'osoie dire,
 Ma dame en avra molt grant ire." (vv. 11912–16)³⁶

["In the name of God, tell me what you think of this." "My lady, however I look I can see nothing that needs improving. Indeed, if I might be so bold, my lady the Empress [ie the heroine, Melior] ought to be jealous."]

The echo of the question "que t'en semble" (*Partonopeus de Blois* v.11912) not once, but twice in the description in *Guillaume de Palerne* (v. 3081, v. 3097) draws

³⁵ For discussions of the different versions, their relative dates and the relationships between them, see *Le Roman de Partonopeu de Blois*, ed. and trans. by Olivier Collet and Pierre-Marie Joris. *Lettres Gothiques* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2005), 7–8, 11–22; Penny Eley, "Partonopeus de Blois": *Romance in the Making* (see note 15), 2, 11; Penny Simons, "A Romance Revisited: Reopening the Question of the Manuscript Tradition of Partonopeus de Blois," *Romania* 115 (1997): 368–405.

³⁶ *Le Roman de Partonopeu de Blois*, ed. and trans. by Olivier Collet and Pierre-Marie Joris (see note 34).

attention to the borrowing. The audience of *Guillaume* have already been prepared to respond to *Partonopeus de Blois* as a narrative model in the very obvious borrowing of name of the heroine Melior which is unique to these two romances;³⁷ here the allusion to the wedding scene in *Partonopeus* takes on particular significance and introduces a series of allusions which suggest that this is an important intertext to examine for its relationship with *Guillaume de Palerne*.

We have already noted that the A version of *Partonopeus* ends with the triple wedding of the heroine, her sister and her cousin. *Guillaume de Palerne* will also end with the triple union of Guillaume and Melior, Alphonse and Florence, and Alixandrine and Brandin. The *Guillaume* poet, however, plays a number of subtle variations upon the triple wedding idea, in which his trademark relocating and refashioning strategy is clearly visible. Firstly, his reference to *Partonopeus*'s wedding scene comes not during his own final triple union, but earlier, on the evening before the abortive wedding between Melior and the Greek prince Laertenidon. Secondly, the Melior of *Partonopeus* is the Empress of Byzantium, but in *Guillaume de Palerne* Melior can attain that status only by marriage to the Greek prince, in contrast to her own status as daughter of the Emperor of Rome.

The name of the prince himself is also highly suggestive, if slightly problematic. As Dunn explains, it is rendered variously in the single ms of *Guillaume*, including, at v. 8690 "Departenidon" (which Micha renders as "de par Tenidon");³⁸ however, comparison with later versions of the story suggest that it is plausible to read this as a reference to the Greek name "Partonopeus" — known in twelfth-century France not only from *Partonopeus de Blois*, but also from the earlier *Roman de Thèbes*.³⁹ If this is the case, then we have another pointer to *Partonopeus de Blois* as the target of a rewriting strategy by the *Guillaume* poet.

This scene has further intertextual links to *Partonopeus* in the skins chosen for the lovers' disguise. The choice of the bear as the animal from which the skins are taken recalls the Continuation of *Partonopeus* in which a greyhound kills a marauding bear in Sardinia.⁴⁰ This occurs in the narrative by the character Anselot, who functions as a double, or *mise en abîme* of the hero figure, of his adventures prior to being reunited with the hero Partonopeus. Anselot acquires a white greyhound, Noon, whom he rescues from a shipwreck; later Noon and Anselot

³⁷ This parallel was noted by Nicola Zingarelli "Il Guillaume de Palerne e i suoi dati di lougo e di tempo," *Miscellanea di archeologia, storia e filologica dedicata al Prof. Antonino Salinas nel LX anniversario del suo insegnamento accademico* (Palermo: Virzi 1907), 256–72; here 261. For further discussion of the significance of the name of the heroine of *Guillaume de Palerne*, see below

³⁸ Michelant emends "Departenidon" to "Laertenidon," the form which occurs just 20 verses later at v. 8710 (see note 1).

³⁹ Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 72.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the dating of the different portions of the Continuation to *Partonopeus de Blois*, see Penny Eley "Partonopeus de Blois": *Romance in the Making* (see note 15), 181–91. The Anselot episode would predate *Guillaume de Palerne*.

assist the Emperor of Rome by killing the bear which is rampaging in Sardinia. The bear is eventually destroyed in a skirmish in the sea in which it attempts to drown Noon, who is rescued again by Anselot.

Here again we see a series of parallels between *Partonopeus* and *Guillaume*: a white animal, a bear, the association with the Emperor of Rome, but in each case the narrative place or function of the original is reworked into a different pattern in *Guillaume de Palerne*. Penny Eley points out the ways in which Anselot's story involves a series of narrative doublings⁴¹; most interestingly, she observes of the Sardinian episode that it "includes a *reprise* of the initial rescue scene, as Anselot swims out to help Noon who is repeatedly being dragged down by the bear and then resurfacing, just as he was being submerged and tossed up again by the waves during the storm."⁴² This links to another doubled motif in *Guillaume de Palerne*, the two crossings of the Straits of Messina made by the werewolf. In the first he swims across, carrying the hero to safety; in the second, he hides with the lovers on board a ship and, upon arrival in Messina, leaps into the water as a diversion to let them escape. He is spotted by the crew who attempt to drown him and the scene closes with both lovers and audience uncertain whether he has survived (vv. 4598–632).⁴³ Again the poet reworks the focus and function of these episodes from the original text; here it is the animal who assists the humans, rather than vice versa, and the scenes in *Guillaume* have a comic dimension to them which is absent in *Partonopeus*.⁴⁴

The rural scenes in *Guillaume de Palerne* thus provide the poet with opportunities to deploy his comedic skills, which are used to draw attention to his play with motifs and narrative elements from other texts. In this respect, his use of *Partonopeus de Blois* has proved to be particularly well developed and sophisticated. Further investigation of the ways in which the *Guillaume* poet rewrites *Partonopeus* will help us to resolve two problems which the portrayal of rural spaces poses. The first is the presence of the Ardennes forest in the

⁴¹ Penny Eley "*Partonopeus de Blois*": *Romance in the Making* (see note 15), 139–46.

⁴² Penny Eley "*Partonopeus de Blois*": *Romance in the Making* (see note 15), 140–41

⁴³ There is another very interesting intertextual link here; the wolf leaping into the sea to protect passengers aboard the ship echoes the Biblical story of Jonah, who had to allow himself to be thrown out of the ship in which he was attempting to escape the command and will of God. *Guillaume de Palerne* contains an earlier reference to the story of Jonah in the prayer uttered by Alixandrine, invoking the aid of God on the eloping lovers. Her words focus both upon the Incarnation, the taking of human form by the Divine, and on the enveloping of Jonah within the animal form of the whale which swallowed him (vv. 3132–41): both examples of one form concealed temporarily within one of a lesser order. See Christine Ferlampin-Acher "*Guillaume de Palerne*: une parodie?" (see note 6), 67.

⁴⁴ The episode of the ship appears also to have been taken up and modified in *Melion* and in the Middle English *William of Palerne* with the addition in the former of one sailor striking the werewolf Melion with a spar, and in the second with all the crew grabbing at weapons with which to strike the beast. See Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 9–10.

immediate vicinity of Rome, a travesty of geographical fact which cannot readily be explained by the poet's recourse to elements of the *merveilleux* in his text; and the second is the fact that the invading force in Palermo in the latter part of the narrative comes from Spain, a historical fallacy which stands in marked contrast to the careful accuracy of historical and political detail surrounding the description of Benevento.

The forest in which the werewolf leaves the infant Guillaume is not named during the narration of this episode: we are simply told that it is 'pres de Roume en la contree' (in the countryside near Rome—v. 170), and it is sufficiently close to the city to act as a hunting ground for the Emperor. The hunting scene introduces a series of allusions to *Partonopeus*, the first that we encounter in the romance. The Emperor in *Guillaume* has been in pursuit of wild boar, just like the young hero and his uncle, the King of France, in *Partonopeus*; in that episode the young hero, during a boar hunt in the Ardennes, pursues his hunting dogs which have foolishly set off after a prize boar, becoming separated from the rest of his party; he wanders, frightened and alone, until he comes upon a boat which magically transports him to the secret kingdom of the heroine, Melior. The description of the hunt in *Guillaume de Palerne* has clear echoes of its predecessor:

... l'emperere
 Qui donc ot Rome a justicier
 Vint en cele forest chacier.
 Molt amena celle foie
 Ensamble o lui gente maisnie,
 Mais trestot seul l'orent guerpi
 Por un sengler qu'orent choisi
 Que li chien acueli avoient
 Qui en cele forest chaçoient.
 De lui s'ierent tuit eslongié
 Cil a cheval et cil a pié,
 Que d'aus ne peut riens nul oïr
 Ne chie[n]* crier, ne cor tentir.
 Ensi par la forest aloit
 Tout escoutant se ja orroit
 Ne cri de chient, ne moienel,
 Car ne li estoit mie bel
 Qu'ensi estoit tos seus remés:
 En une voie est arrestés.
 Si comme iluec estoit tos sous,
 Atant es vos que li garous
 Vient devant lui. I. cerf chaçant:
 De pren en pren la va sivant
 Et l'emperes cort après;

Tant l'a suï tot a eslés
Que sor l'enfant s'est embatus. (vv.388–413)

* My emendation⁴⁵

[The Emperor who, in those days, ruled over Rome, came hunting in this forest. On this occasion he brought with him a large hunting party, but they had deserted him because they had spotted a boar which the hunting dogs had scented and pursued. Everyone, those on foot and on horseback had all gone away and he could hear nothing of them, neither the baying of the hounds nor the sound of the horns. So he wandered in the forest, listening out to see if he could hear either the dogs or the horns, for he was anxious at being left all on his own. He came to a halt on a track and as he stood there alone, the werewolf crossed in front of him, chasing a deer; the wolf was hot upon the track of the deer and the Emperor ran after it. He followed it so far at top speed that he happened upon the child.]

Here we can see the first examples of the rewriting and repositioning of narrative elements which marked the poet's approach to other borrowings from *Partonopeus*. In *Guillaume de Palerne* it is the Emperor, the older adult male, not the younger adolescent, who becomes separated from the rest of the hunting party; and it is not he, but everyone else in the party who has set off in pursuit of the boar, leaving him alone.

But this is also more complex than a reworking of ideas from an earlier text; it also involves a recognition of the both intertext and the fact that this intertext is one which itself rewrites and reworks elements from other narratives, combining and fusing these disparate elements into a new form. The opening hunting scene in *Partonopeus* is a clear reworking of the start of Marie de France's *Guigemar*, in which the eponymous hero is wounded in the hunt for a white stag, and wanders alone until he finds a boat which magically takes him to a land where he meets the woman he is destined to love.⁴⁶ The opening part of *Partonopeus* in particular is marked by the juxtaposition of elements clearly derived from the tradition of the Breton *lai*, alongside Classical sources and structures which clearly belong to the romance tradition; it even incorporates the tradition of the courtly lyric alongside these, in a brilliant fusion of its literary antecedents.⁴⁷

The scene in *Guillaume* provides a commentary on this rewriting, by putting back the deer which had been the prey animal in *Guigemar*, and adds to it a wolf,

⁴⁵ Micha (see note 1) renders this word "chier" which makes no sense; Michelant gives "chien," and I follow his reading here.

⁴⁶ On the links with *Guigemar*, see Colleen P. Donagher, "Socializing the Sorceress: The Fairy Mistress Theme in *Lanval*, *Le Bel Inconnu* and *Partonopeu de Blois*," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 4 (1987): 69–90; Sebastian I. Sobceki, "A Source for the Magical Ship in *Partonopeu de Blois* and Marie de France's *Guigemar*," *Notes and Queries* 48 (2001): 220–22.

⁴⁷ Thomas H. Brown, "The Relationship Between *Partonopeus de Blois* and the Cupid and Psyche Tradition," *Brigham Young University Studies* 5 (1964): 193–202; Katalin Halász, *Images d'auteur dans le roman médiéval, XIIe–XIIIe siècles* (Debrecen: Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem, 1992).

borrowed from another of Marie's stories, the werewolf tale *Bisclavret*. So, in *Guillaume de Palerne*, we have a boar hunt punctuated by the sudden appearance of a wolf, chasing a deer. The choice of the initial hunting scene in *Partonopeus* alongside its own antecedent *Guigemar* as the model for the discovery of the foundling Guillaume signals this poet's engagement with medieval narrative as a process of bringing together material from a range of sources and recombining them, but in such a way as to leave the originals recognizable in their new setting. The initial forest episode thus becomes a narrative space in which a particular notion of rewriting is introduced, and that is the combination of two separate models—the *lai* and the romance—into a hybrid form. This hybridization is highlighted by two very clear features in *Guillaume de Palerne*: firstly, the central figure werewolf functions as a concretization of this technique,⁴⁸ retaining the elements of man and beast, of folklore figure and courtly hero; secondly, there are allusions to two specific intertexts in the name of the heroine. "Melior" is both a reference to the Melior of the romance *Partonopeus de Blois*, but is also very similar the name of Melion, another werewolf and hero of the *lai* that bears his name.⁴⁹

The poet then builds upon this process of fusion in subsequent allusions to *Partonopeus* in his romance, linking them back to this opening scene. The disguise of the hero and heroine as white bears, another transformation into a hybrid form, contains a *reprise* of the hunting scene and its allusions to the Breton *lais* in the fact that the skins of the bears are white, like the hide of the deer hunted in *Guigemar*. The Continuation of *Partonopeus* had reworked that idea into the white coat of Noon the greyhound who kills the Sardinian bear. *Guillaume de Palerne* then recombines these elements in yet another way to give his lovers the skins of two white bears, later the skins of two deer and a friendly wolf to accompany them as Noon did his master.

The doubling of the animal skins is reminiscent of the doubling technique which Penny Eley has noted as characteristic, both of the main narrative, and the Continuation of *Partonopeus de Blois*. The white greyhound Noon is a repetition of the two black hunting dogs which afford companionship to their master Partonopeus in the main part of the narrative,⁵⁰ the change in colour from black to white functioning as a reminder of the potentially sinister overtones of Melior's kingdom and her retention of the young Partonopeus there.

The final link in this chain of references comes at the end of the romance when the name of the forest as Ardennes is given; the werewolf, once he is returned to

⁴⁸ Sconduto sees Alphonse/the werewolf as the hero of *Guillaume de Palerne*, rather than Guillaume himself. Leslie Sconduto, "Blurred and Shifting Identities" (see note 11).

⁴⁹ Christine Ferlampin-Acher "Guillaume de Palerne: une parodie?" (see note 6) notes this naming similarity, although she sees it as evidence that there is only transitory reference to *Partonopeus de Blois* in *Guillaume*, and that names and their borrowing are deceptive,⁶¹

⁵⁰ Penny Eley, "*Partonopeus de Blois*": Romance in the Making (see note 15), 140.

his human form of the Spanish prince Alphonse, recalls his actions in rescuing Guillaume, which include carrying him to the forest near Rome:

‘Tant ting ensamble o toi ma voie
Que t’enportai droit en Ardaïne,
Une forest de bestes plaine
Qui a une lieue est de Roume’ (vv. 8190–93)

[I kept on going with you until I brought you right to the Ardaïne, which is a forest full of wild beasts a league away from Rome.]

Scholars have tended to tie themselves in geographical knots trying to explain the obvious correspondence of “Ardaïne” and the forest of Ardennes which is demonstrably not “a league away from Rome.” Zingarelli assumed the poet was ignorant of the location of the forest, and Dunn tries to see it as a reference to the district of Ardea, located about twenty miles south of Rome.⁵¹ However, if we read this as a reference to the opening scene of *Partonopeus* it makes much more sense. That hunting expedition took place in the Ardennes, a location which has structural importance not only at the start, but elsewhere in *Partonopeus* and its Continuation.⁵² *Guillaume de Palerne* then rewrites the opening hunting episode, adding to it another intertextual layer in the reference to the Roman foundling motif. This gives rise to a new set of juxtapositions, captured in the topological solecism at the close of *Guillaume*; and this in its turn becomes less glaring geographical inaccuracy and more a pointer to the rewriting strategy of the poet. It is also significant that this naming comes from the mouth of the werewolf who, we have seen, functions as an interdiegetic metaphor for that very strategy. At this point in the romance, Alphonse, now restored to human form, becomes an inscribed author figure as he retells the poet’s tale of the adventures of Guillaume.⁵³

This brings us to our second historico-geographical problem in *Guillaume de Palerne*, the choice of a Spanish invasion force to invade Guillaume’s lands in Palermo and also the choice of a Spanish prince to be the central character of the romance, the werewolf. Historically, Southern Italy and Sicily were never attacked by the Spanish, either Muslim or Christian in the twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. So why does the poet make the Spanish royal house significant players in a romance about a hero from Palermo? Once again, *Partonopeus de Blois* provides us with some possible answers. *Partonopeus* features a character called Urrique,

⁵¹ Zingarelli, “Il *Guillaume de Palerne*” (see note 36), 262; Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf* (see note 3), 80–81.

⁵² In the Continuation, part of the adventures related by Anselot take place in the Ardennes; so there is also a reference back to the presence of the white bear skins and their rewriting of *Partonopeus* in this final naming of the Ardennes forest.

⁵³ Cf. Scuduto *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf* (see note 6), 104.

who is the sister of the heroine Melior and plays a significant role in uniting the lovers in the second part of the romance.

Her very unusual name is of Spanish origin and its presence in the romance can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the *Partonopeus* poet shows a significant interest in, and accurate knowledge of Spain in the second third of the twelfth century.⁵⁴ Secondly, there were a series of marriage links between Castile and northern France and England in the period 1150–1170.⁵⁵ Urraca was a common name in the royal house of Castile. The Urraca most likely to have been known to the *Partonopeus* poet was the daughter of King Alfonso I of Portugal who married Fernando II of Leon and bore him a son, the future Alfonso IX of Leon; however, she was repudiated by Fernando who later had a liaison with, and subsequently married a second Urraca. This Urraca also bore a son and disputed the succession of the first Urraca's son in favour of her own.⁵⁶

This is all very similar to the pattern of marriages and successions in *Guillaume de Palerne's* Spanish houses: Alphonse of Spain has a first wife who gives him a son, another Alphonse; his second wife, daughter of the King of Portugal, disputes the inheritance in favor of her son by turning her stepson into a werewolf. The parallels between this historical background to a striking name in *Partonopeus*, and the pattern of marriages in *Guillaume's* Spanish royal house strongly suggest both a recognition of the way in which *Partonopeus de Blois* rewrites not only other romances, but also contemporary history,⁵⁷ and an engagement with that rewriting in a subsequent rewriting by the *Guillaume* poet. And here again, that rewriting is typified by a repositioning and reattribution of elements from the original in their new narrative setting. References to *Partonopeus de Blois* and its rewriting technique which the poet of *Guillaume de Palerne* seeks to surpass in a sophisticated display of medieval *aemulatio*—the reworking of source elements into a new and better form—are, significantly, located precisely in those rural spaces that constitute the most noticeable feature of the romance's spatial architecture.

So what, in conclusion, can we say about the significance of rural space in *Guillaume de Palerne*? First of all, we have seen that rural spaces form a key part of a structure to the romance which is based upon patterns of spatial types. More

⁵⁴ See Anthime Fourrier, *Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen Age, Volume I Les débuts (XIIe siècle)*, (Paris: Nizet, 1960), 404–10; Milton A. Buchanan, "Partinuplés de Bles. An Episode in Tirso's *Amar por Señas*. Lope's *La vuida valenciana*," *Modern Language Notes* 21 (1906): 3–8; Penny Eley, "Les Toponymes espagnols dans *Partonopeus de Blois*," *Romania* 126 (2008): 497–506.

⁵⁵ See Penny Eley, "*Partonopeus de Blois*": *Romance in the Making* (see note 15), 187–88.

⁵⁶ See Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 108–33.

⁵⁷ See Penny Simons and Penny Eley, "The Prologue to *Partonopeus de Blois*: Text, Context and Subtext," *French Studies* 49 (1995): 1–16; Penny Eley and Penny Simons, "*Partonopeus de Blois* and Chrétien de Troyes: A Re-assessment," *Romania* 121 (2003): 329–47.

importantly, they are the key to the theme of the romance, a work in which nothing is as it seems, as epitomized by the central figure of the beneficent werewolf. Located between the court and the wild, just like the werewolf, the intermediate rural space of the *vergier* contains elements of courtly pleasure and of danger; and so it is the natural habitat for the transformed hybrid versions of Alphonse, Guillaume and Melior who comprise both morally good courtly humans and also potentially dangerous wild animals.

But the very text itself is not all that it seems. It may appear to be a werewolf narrative like the *lais* of *Bisclavret* or *Melion*, both of which contribute features to the romance; but intermixed with this are elements of romance, most notably *Partonopeus de Blois*, itself a hybrid of rewriting. The practice of rewriting, fundamental to the process of medieval composition, creates new hybrids in which both new and old are discernible, just as the true natures of all three major protagonists remain visible beneath the various “beastly” outer forms they adopt. And it is in the wild spaces of the forest and the lands between Rome and Benevento, and beyond, that the *Guillaume* poet leaves us traces of that rewriting to follow, inviting us to see the stories that lie beneath the skin of his tale.

Chapter 12

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The Forest as Locus of Transition and Transformation in the Epic Romance *Berte as grans piés*¹

In *Li Roumans de Berte as grans piés*, a romance-epic written in 1273² by the minstrel Adenet le Roi, the forest occupies a central position and plays a significant role in the formation of the legendary figure of Berthe, the future queen of France, mother of the future Emperor Charlemagne (crowned in 800). Adenet's version of this popular legend combines historical elements and folkloric motifs, in particular the well-known tale-type of the substituted bride.³ His reinterpretation of the cultural material of the past is punctuated, at key moments of the narration, with festival dates marking the course of the year, anchoring thus the epic poem in a popular and liturgical calendar.⁴ Within such a context, I will examine in this study how the primeval space of the forest, both real and symbolic, embodies the locus of Berthe's resilience and personal transformation throughout her transitional period

¹ *Adenet le Roi, Berte as grans piés*, ed. Albert Henry (Geneva: Droz, 1982). This thirteenth-century epic poem inspired a prose version in the fifteenth century, very similar to Adenet's. See *Histoire de la reine Berthe et du roy Pépin*, ed. Piotr Tylus. Textes littéraires français, 536 (Genève: Droz, 2001).

² See Albert Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1), 9–12, for a thorough description of the existing manuscripts of Berthe's legend.

³ Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958), tale-type number 405. For the cycle of the banished woman, see Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson*, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), vol. 1; type 403, 236–38, type 450, 265–67, and type 533, 312–13.

⁴ Philippe Walter, *Mythologie chrétienne: Rites et mythes du Moyen Age*. Collection Mythologies (Paris: Editions Entente, 1992), 15–17.

in this inhospitable place. Hidden from the world, as she knows it, the betrayed young princess, abandoned and stripped of her identity and social status, embarks on a quest as a new persona, keeping her name as the only link to her past. This period of isolation represents her initiation: her rite of passage into adulthood until the scheme aimed against her is uncovered and the culprits are convicted. Only then will her encounter with the king, in the propitious environment of the forest, pave the way toward her reintegration and reinstatement as the rightful queen. The frightening space of the forest that haunted the medieval mind, and yet represented at the same time an important element of the medieval imaginary, becomes a refuge, a place of regeneration and growth for the future queen. Subsequently, it is under the auspices of its spring foliage that the reunited royal couple will initiate the mythical beginnings of Charlemagne's genealogy. Ultimately, the forest proves to be instrumental in the transformation of Berthe, from victim to heroine, therefore contributing to her popularity and legendary dimension.

The legend of Berthe the Debonair, daughter of Floire and Blanchefleur⁵ of Hungary, is the source of more than twenty different accounts in varied genres, lengths, and languages from southern Germany to the Netherlands, Italy, France, Spain, and England.⁶ Its success and inspiration stretches from the end of the twelfth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁷ The wide circulation of the legend in its different manifestations attests to the popularity⁸ and the heroic status of Berthe, a naive and inexperienced young girl who, anxious about her upcoming marriage with Pepin the Brief, plans to deceive the king by having her maidservant exchange places with her during the wedding night, a very common folktale motif that appears in a number of tales.⁹ She is simply afraid of the pain associated with the first night of sexual intercourse, but as a consequence she soon falls victim to the scheme of her servants, a mother and her daughter, is betrayed, driven out of the palace, and abandoned in the woods. Her ordeal in the forest—a

⁵ For a thorough study of the Pan-European narrative of Floire and Blancheflor, see Patricia E. Grieve, *Floire and Blancheflor and the European Romance*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 32 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶ Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1), 31–32. Some of the versions are: the Franco-Venetian composition of *Berta da li pè grandi*, and in book VI of *Real di Francia*; in France; the legend is also found in the *Chronique rimée* (mid thirteenth century) by Philippe Mousket, and *Le Miracle de Berte in Charlemagne* (1300–1308) by Girard d'Amiens.

⁷ Gustav Adolf Beckmann, "Berthe au(x) grand(s) pied(s) ou plutôt: les enfances d'un 'faux batard'," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 51 (2008): 31–328; here 314.

⁸ Berthe's popularity has crossed the literary realm and entered the everyday language even today with the expression "Au temps où Berthe filait" (At the time when Berthe was spinning) to convey that an event took place a very, very long time ago.

⁹ See Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

space defined by threatening elements, both natural and human—lasts nine and a half years (1426) until the plot is uncovered and Berthe is reinstated as the legitimate queen.

Adenet's thirteenth-century literary rendering of this legend incorporates a rich oral tradition of beliefs and folk customs that surround the obscure origins of the spouse of Pepin the Brief, a legend that emerges anew in his epic poem. Following the conventional practice of the time, he claims that a monk at the abbey of St. Denis showed him the manuscript containing Berthe and Pepin's stories.¹⁰ The poet utilizes the strategy of the found text, thus emphasizing the veracity of the story, yet proposing at the same time his own version. It has been well established that medieval authors did not invent the material they used for their work; rather, they embellished and adapted existing texts for the public of their time.¹¹ Adenet's choice is a story he claims he read in the library of the powerful Benedictine order at the abbey of St. Denis near the city of Paris:

A un moine courtois, c'on nommoit Savari,
M'acointai telement, Damedieu en graci,
Que le livre as estoires me moustra et g'i vi
L'estoire de Bertain¹² et de Pepin aussi. (8–11)¹³

[With a courtly monk, named Savari,
I acquainted myself thus, I thank the Lord our God,
That he showed me the book of stories and I saw
The story of Bertain, and Pepin too.]

As the keepers and chroniclers of the annals of the Kingdom of France, the monks of St. Denis had a vested interest in royal genealogies.¹⁴ And being in possession of a vast library, the religious of this monastic community were thus the conduits for spreading legends or elements of legends regarding members of royal dynasties, stories that were of great interest for feudal society. Adenet's use of the word *estoire* (story) in the incipit of his long poem could be understood to mean, as Philippe Walter suggests in his analysis of the Tristan myth, that the text the poet uses as the source of his work was perhaps composed of diverse episodes that

¹⁰ See Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1); the version of the legend Adenet claims to have used, as model for his lyric poem, has in fact been lost to us, if it ever existed, 30.

¹¹ Philippe Walter, "Myth and Texts in the Middle Ages: Folklore as Literary 'Source,'" *Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition*, ed. Francesca Canadé Sautman, Diana Conchado, and Giuseppe Carlo Di Scipio (New York: St. Martin Press, 1998): 59–75; here 61.

¹² Bertain is a diminutive of the name Berthe.

¹³ Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1); all further citations will be taken from this text edition. All translations of the poem are the product of my collaboration with a colleague, Dr. Elise Leahy, Southern Utah University.

¹⁴ St. Denis is also the royal burial place of kings and queens of France. See *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard. 8 vols. (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1920).

were not yet organized into structured narratives.¹⁵ Since, according to the folklorist Vladimir Propp, a very close connection exists between folklore and literature,¹⁶ the material Adenet inherited from the oral tradition, combined with the story he read, transited to literacy through his selective and creative process when he translated those pieces into an epic in which numerous folktale narratives are interwoven with the main plot.

Adenet's epic romance of one hundred and forty couplets in alexandrines is considered a late *chanson de geste*, a genre that by the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century had become a hybrid one, including elements of romance.¹⁷ While his portrayal of Berthe corresponds in many ways to other versions, depicting her as a sensitive and naïve young woman, the portrait also includes features more characteristic of the courtly lady, an influence of Provençal and Breton literature. Undeniably his travels with his patron Gui of Dampierre, Count of Flanders, brought him into contact with a fecund intellectual atmosphere notably at the French courts.¹⁸

Whereas the medieval story teller exploits nature and, in particular, the forest as an imaginary space that frames the adventure, Adenet's treatment of this space goes beyond the symbolic and stylized background typical of any *chanson de geste*.¹⁹ his forest also mirrors Berthe's emotional turmoil and subsequent serenity. However, his epic poem still limits nature's description to certain aspects of the surroundings, using symbols rather than metaphors; the poem also incorporates most of the formularity of the epic genre such as hyperbole and repetition, which abound throughout the text.²⁰ Adenet's representation of female characters, mainly Berthe, does not succumb, using Joan W. Scott's words, to 'the notion of fixity,'²¹ but rather presents us with a more complex exploration of gender. If Berthe displays at first the stereotypical signs of her gender—passivity, tears, and complains— her characterization is later counterbalanced by the display of signs

¹⁵ Walter, "Myth and Texts in the Middle Ages" (see note 11), 69.

¹⁶ Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, trans. Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin.

Theory and History of Literature, 5 (1971; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 5.

¹⁷ Michel Zink, *Introduction à la littérature française du Moyen Age: Latin et langue vulgaire; chanson de geste, histoire, roman; amour courtois et rêve chevaleresque; allégorie, rhétorique, herméneutique*. Le livre de poche, 500 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Nancy et Librairie Générale de France, 1993), 43.

¹⁸ Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1), 21.

¹⁹ When Berthe is abandoned in the forest, she sits under an olive tree, a species common in the biblical narratives and used symbolically in the *chansons de geste*. It goes without saying that olive trees have never grown in medieval forests north of the Alps.

²⁰ Jean Rychner, *La Chanson de geste: Essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs*. Publications Romanes et Françaises, 53 (Geneva: Droz, 1955), 71.

²¹ Joan W. Scott, "A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053–75; here 1068.

of the “femme forte,”²² which in her case is not the display of physical strength that some heroines in the *chansons* acquire by disguising themselves as men, but rather a transformation from passive to active character. Determined to survive, she plays, assuredly, an active role in the epic, relegating king Pepin the Brief to a not always flattering secondary position.

Most certainly, the fragmentary nature of the socio-historical evidence of Pepin’s reign, a reign marked by strained relations with his vassals, was more propitious to the formation of the queen Berthe’s legend, material of great interest to the feudal audience. Since the *chansons de geste* served as a vehicle to explore, among other things, the complexities of cultural contact and the contradictions of feudal society, as Sharon Kinoshita argues, their vitality was linked to the historical conjuncture in which they appeared.²³ However, Adenet’s epic romance diverts from the traditional *chansons* in the sense that most of the earlier epics are reputed for their extended and detailed descriptions of battles since society made fighting a central occupation for men. These scenes are absent, or rather barely mentioned by Berthe since Adenet’s plot, on the contrary, focuses almost exclusively on two dualistic pairs of women in conflict with each other; Berthe and her mother Blanchefleur, both of noble lineage, and their malevolent counterpart, Aliste and her mother Margiste, both of serf origin.

Although Berthe’s legend originates in the eighth century (Pepin was crowned in 751), Adenet Le Roi, familiar with the French court, situates his version of the story in the midst of the courts of Louis IX and Philip the Bold in thirteenth-century France. The anachronism is apparent in his description of Paris, seen through the dazzled eyes of Berthe’s mother, the Queen Blanchefleur: the topography of city appears much more developed than the city was in Pepin’s time.

La dame ert a Montmartre, s’esgarda la valee,
Vit la cit de Paris, qui est et longue et lee,
Mainte tour, mainte sale et mainte cheminee; (1962–64)

[The dame was in Montmartre, contemplating the valley.
Saw the city of Paris, which is long and wide,
Many towers, many halls and many chimneys;]

But far more important than the city, the forest takes a life of its own in the poem. As the Jacques Le Goff famously states, although the forests of the High Middle

²² See Francesca Sautman, “L’Épopée tailable’: Structures sociales de l’imaginaire épique. (Essai sur la forme et la fonction de l’épopée médiévale française),” diss. UCLA 1978, 240–75. For example: Ide in *Ide et Olive*, Eliénor in *Baudouin de Sebourg*, and Aye in *Tristan de Nanteuil*.

²³ Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 115.

Ages, impenetrable and widespread, covered the medieval western world with a dense canopy and represented the frightening horizon of medieval society,²⁴ this is no longer true by the end of the thirteenth century. Indeed, the intensive deforestation effort carried out throughout Western Europe to expand the arable lands and feed the steadily growing population²⁵ paralleled the rapid growth and development of the cities.²⁶ But the continued expansion of the agricultural space to the detriment of the forest started to slow, as Georges Duby notes, by the beginning of the fourteenth century.²⁷ By Adenet's time, the primitive forest still had an important imprint in the medieval imaginary, and was certainly a source of inspiration for poets: it was a place of nostalgia and the realm of adventure.

In Adenet's poem two geographical forests frame Berthe's travels and trials: the forest of the Ardennes, bordering the kingdom of France, and the forest of Maine, well known by the minstrel, where her ordeal takes place. Following a common poetical convention, the poem begins in the month of April, the month of renewal and anticipation *par excellence*, but this idyllic backdrop is drastically transformed by the time Berthe is taken to the woods to be abandoned: the forest is no longer the welcoming green canopy, but instead a deserted, sinister and cold place where Berthe finds herself powerless:

En la forest dou Mans fu la roïne Berte
Et la nuis estoit molt et orrible et desperte; (882–83)

[In the forest of Le Mans was the queen Berte
And the night was very horrible and harsh;]

... Berte dort enz el bois desus la terre dure,
Et la nuis estoit molt et hideuse et obscure
Et molt estoit li airs de froide tempereure;
Et la dame n'ot pas assez de vesteüre, (1010–14)

[... Berthe sleeps in the woods on the hard ground,
And the night was very hideous and dark
And the air was very cold and damp;
And the lady did not have enough clothes]

²⁴ Jacques Le Goff, *La Civilisation de l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), 106.

²⁵ Monique Bourin-Derruau, *Temps d'équilibres, temps de ruptures (XIIIe siècle)*. Nouvelle Histoire de la France Médiévale, 4 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), 83–93. See also Dominique Barthélemy, *L'Ordre seigneurial (XIe–XIIe siècle)*. Nouvelle Histoire de la France Médiévale, 3 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), 119–21.

²⁶ See the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*. ed. Albrecht Classen, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture* 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2009).

²⁷ Georges Duby, *L'Economie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans l'occident médiéval (France, Angleterre, Empire, IXe–XVe siècles)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), 174.

When Berthe finds herself abandoned, disoriented, and without shelter in the unfamiliar surroundings of the forest, nature, in Adenet's depiction, reflects and at the same time highlights her physical and emotional distress. The sudden removal from society symbolically occurs in autumn, a time of transition and division between seasons that prefigures, at the onset of the long winter months, a metaphorical death or hibernation. The brutal severance from her protective environment and social group throws her into a void, a long interval of nine and a half years during which she will lead a simple and anonymous life among the common people living and working within or in the vicinity of the forest.

Adenet's description of the forest is one inherited from different traditions: it is first and foremost the unformed space as type of the primeval wood inherited from the Greco-Latin tradition, but it is also the forest of the Celtic tradition and its fecund imaginary. In spite of the terror it inspired, the *selva oscura* (the dark forest), as Dante calls it, the ambivalent realm outside of the boundaries of civilization became, in the medieval imaginary, a space inhabited by marvelous and fearsome creatures. It is the forest from which the wandering knights must extricate themselves after venturing into its depths in search of their true identity or simply in search of adventure propitious in this perilous setting: it is the forest of Perceval, Yvain, and Tristan, among others.²⁸

Located on the margins of society, the forest is omnipresent not only in the imagination of the poets, but also in the lives of all medieval society. It surrounds the rural space, marking the limits of the cultivated lands, and often constitutes a natural border, the frontier between two adjacent territories. If the forest is, first and foremost, the exclusive hunting grounds of the feudal lords with its large wild game population,²⁹ it is also, in its everyday condition, a space open and accessible to all. In the domestic economy, the forest provides a source of additional income for an array of humble and poor laborers: peasants collect there the indispensable firewood for heating and cooking,³⁰ and send their pigs to graze in the underbrush.³¹

The forest also represents an important complementary resource for the meager peasants' diet, since harvests were of an unpredictable nature. Indeed, peasants often lived under the constant menace of food shortage.³² In a predominantly rural

²⁸ See also the various comments on the medieval forest by Albrecht Classen in the Introduction to the present volume.

²⁹ See the contributions to this volume by Abigail P. Dowling and Marilyn L. Sandidge.

³⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *La Civilisation* (see note 24), 106–09.

³¹ Duby, *L'Economie rurale* (see note 27), 247–60.

³² Duby, *L'Economie rurale* (see note 27), 93. See also Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet and Vincent Chambarlhac, *L'Âge d'or de la forêt* (Rodez: Editions du Rouergue, 1995), 17. These humble people pick in the woods a number of things, such as chestnuts, a basic staple in the peasants' diet, as well as mushrooms, watercress, nettle, fruits, nuts, and the honey of wild bees.

economy, in which a high yield agricultural production was not yet mastered, farmers were regularly expanding the fields to increase cereal production, but by the beginning of the thirteenth century the clearing of forests and therefore the advance of cultivated land came to a standstill. However since the land was a source of wealth, subsistence, and a source of power in the Middle Ages, a period in which money was scarce,³³ a great effort was made, starting in the last decades of the twelfth century, toward regulation, exploitation, and, therefore preservation of the remaining forests. The lords' representatives in particular supervised the cutting of trees, which represented a significant percentage of the revenue in the royal domain.³⁴

As the sixteen-year-old Berthe embarks on a journey that takes her from Hungary to France, crossing two important forests to bring her to the land of her future husband, her old servant, Margiste, takes advantage of the ignorance of the inexperienced girl, by describing the wedding night as a frightful experience, and presenting the first sexual encounter as a violent act. Since Berthe and Aliste, the serf's daughter, share a great physical resemblance, Margiste proposes the substitution of her daughter for the bride during the nuptial night, in order to alleviate the sexual anxieties of the adolescent princess. Mother and daughter of serf origin will exploit the young girl's fear by partnering to bring about an immediate change in their social status.

The following morning, after the marriage has been consummated, Berthe's claim to the throne is endangered. The open rivalry that now opposes the two identical young women, Aliste representing Berthe's darker side, is swiftly resolved as the new queen self-inflicts a wound to her thigh and accuses Berthe of the assault. The location of the wound is euphemistically sexual. Victim of a sordid machination, the young Berthe, still posing as a servant, succumbs to the old servant's wrath and boundless ambition for her daughter and herself. Berthe's removal from the court follows the narrative of a popular tale, associating her fate with Snow White from the fairy-tale tradition as established by the Brothers Grimm in 1812 but drawing from much older sources, another naive young girl dispossessed of everything.

In her new lowered social status and dressed in a white petticoat as a reminder of her innocence, Berthe is taken to the forest of Le Mans to be killed, a motif found in numerous tales, but, as in Snow White's tale, the henchmen, out of pity, and puzzled by the fine garments of the so-called servant, abandon Berthe in the woods. And, as proof of her death, a piglet's hart is presented to Margiste, the mastermind

³³ See Carlo M. Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilization in the Mediterranean World (Fifth to Seventeenth Century)* (New York: Gordian Press Inc., 1967), 9–12.

³⁴ Duby, *L'Economie rurale* (see note 27), 247–60.

of the plot. Left alone in the forest, Berthe's capacity for endurance, and her character strength are immediately put to the test:

Par le bois va la dame, qui grant paour avait
 Ce n'est pas grant merveille se li cuers il doloit
 (. . .) A destre et a senestre molt souvent regardoit,
 (. . .) Quant s'estoit arrestee, molt tenrement ploroit. (745–50)

[Through the woods goes the lady who was very frightened
 It is not a great marvel if her heart was aching
 (. . .) To the right and to the left she was looking often,
 (. . .) When she stopped, she cried tenderly.]

While her behavior in the first third of the verse narrative fits the epic ideal of the young woman, timid and passive, and Berthe according to her age, gender, and social status shows clear signs of fitting the stereotype, the episode in the forest very quickly triggers an important transformation: Berthe undergoes a profound psychological and moral development. But on the first day in the forest, she has to find ways of reassuring and empowering herself by counteracting the overwhelming terror the forest induces in her with prayers and the invocation of saints to protect her and intercede in her favor:

Dame, si vraiment com j'en ai grant mestier."
 Lors se met a genous, la terre va baisier,
 "Sains Juliens," fait ele, "vueilliez moi herbergier!"
 Sa paternostre a dite, que n'i volt detriier,
 Sur son destre costé s'est alee couchier, (972–76)

[Lady, since I am really in great need.
 Then, she kneels down, she kisses the ground,
 "Saint Julian," she says, "provide me shelter!"
 She said the Our Father, not wanting to postpone it,
 On her right side, she went to sleep.]

Spontaneously, the terrified and defenseless young girl responds to the situation not only with tears, but also with prayers, finding refuge and solace in religion. She implores the Virgin Mary to be her intercessor, and, conforming to a common popular practice, she invokes several saints to reassure herself: Saint Julian the Hospitaller, patron saint of pilgrims and travelers, and later Saint Barb and Saint Katherine, both virgin martyrs to their faith:

Sainte Barbe reclaime, qui fu vraie convertte,
 Et sainte Katerine – chascune fu offerte
 Pour Dieu a grant martire, s'en orent tel desserte (890–92)

[She calls for Saint Barbara, who was a true convert,
 And Saint Katherine – each of them was offered
 To God in great martyrdom, praying for such reward]

In the face of adversity, she turns to two women saints, models of strength, courage, and determination. Saint Barb, later renamed Barbara to erase the androgynous aspect of her name, interestingly enough attempted in her own way to avoid marriage; she is invoked against sudden death, accidents, and death without confession. Manifestly, although Berthe agreed to marry Pepin the Brief, she has passively resisted that union. The other saint, Saint Katherine, always presented in the iconography with her wheel, was enormously revered in the Middle Ages; she was, among other attributes, the patron saint of unmarried women.³⁵

The invocation of saints is not only Berthe's prerogative; on the contrary, every character in the epic romance refers to a saint or several, a practice which was, according to Peter Brown, widespread in Europe already by the mid-fifth century. He affirms that the cult of the saints "ringed the population with intimate friends,"³⁶ men and women that had suffered, had overcome obstacles, and had finally triumphed in the name of religion. By the end of the thirteenth century, a venerated legion of saints had become not only the mediators between God and humans, but also between men and the elements of the natural world. In her forced solitude, Berthe comforts and surrounds herself spiritually with three particular virgins: Mary, Barb, and Katherine.

At this point of the narrative, Berthe's plight and anguish are not only directly related to the dangers lurking in the woods, but after the incident in the thieves' den, the risk of being raped supplants all her fears. For a woman, and, she is only sixteen years of age, to wander in the forest is to expose herself to men's lust, and rape is a brutal reality she will face twice.³⁷ The first occurrence takes place in the robbers' hideout where she finds shelter from the inclement weather. While the two men fight against each other for her possession, she is fortunate enough to escape unscathed. The second time she would almost have been raped is years later when she encounters the king in the forest. In the meantime, the necessity of protecting her virginity drives her to hide her true identity, the two aspects being closely linked with each other since the loss of the virginity would directly affect her future:

Puisqu'il vous plaist, biau sire, que j'aie a endurer,
Je vueil pour vous mon cors traveillier et pener;
Or me vueilliez biau sire, de ce perill geter.

³⁵ Gaston Duchet-Suchaux and Michel Pastoureau, *The Bible and the Saints* (Paris and New York: Flammarion, 1994), 56–57, 76–77.

³⁶ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, New Series, 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 50.

³⁷ For mostly German, but also European perspectives on this topic, see Albrecht Classen, *Sexuality and Rape in the Middle Ages: A Critical Discourse in Premodern German and European Literature*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 7 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011).

Je vueil pour vostre amour ici endroit vouer
 Un veu que je tenrai a tous jours sans fausser,
 Que ja mais ne dirai, tant com porrai durer,
 Que soie fille a roi ne k'a Pepin le ber
 Soie femme espousee, ja mais n'en quier parler,
 (. . .) Que dou cors me laissasse honnir ne vergonder;
 Ma virginité vueil se Dieu plaist, bien garder,
 Car qui pert pucelage, ce est sans recouvrer. (1046–53; 1057–59)

[Since it pleases you dear Lord that I have to endure,
 I want my body to labor and toil for you;
 Thus sweet Lord, save me from this danger.
 For your love I want to make a promise here and now
 A promise that I will always keep and not betray,
 That I will never say as long as I am able to resist,
 That I am a kings' daughter and belong to Pepin the baron
 That I am a married woman, I will never say,
 (. . .) I will not allow my body to be dishonored or shamed;
 If it pleases God to protect my virginity ,
 Because who loses her virginity, cannot get it back.]

Exiled, Berthe consents to a new life of work and sorrow, comparing herself to the biblical Eve, and with the hardship she foresees, she vows to protect her virginity at all costs. The inclusion of this fact by the minstrel Adenet is an original addition to Berthe's legend, and concerns the importance given in the text to her chastity and its safeguard.³⁸ While marriage is a transition from the state of virgin to spouse, Berthe has remained untouched and virginal. She has relinquished her place in the royal bed to her servant Aliste, underestimating the consequences of a decision that alters the course of her life. In spite of her misjudgment, she is nevertheless conscious that she has to remain a virgin as she was promised to Pepin.

The queen's body is symbolically linked to its integrity and protection, and because matters of sexuality and reproduction are one of the few areas where women can exercise control, it is therefore crucial that Berthe remains physically intact during her years away from the court. Losing her virginity to a man other than the king, voluntarily or not, would be considered, in her case, a crime of *lèse-majesté*. Furthermore, it would make impossible her return to the court, and alienate her from her kin. The queen's position at the court of France, as a rule, was defined by her marriage to the king, and her fidelity was a warrant in matters of reproduction. Her position was a precarious and vulnerable one, and her dependence on her husband was a complete one until the ninth century marking

³⁸ Henry, *Berte as grans piés* (see note 1), 38.

a turn in queen's increased visibility and prominence at court.³⁹ Although queens had no actual power at the court, there is, as Peggy McCracken argues, an equation between the queen's body and royal sovereignty.⁴⁰ Surrounded by treacherous servants since her departure from Hungary, Berthe is, by contrast, surprisingly protected in the forest; this otherwise dangerous environment acts as barrier shielding her from human and animal violence: first she averts being raped, and later a fatal attack by a bear.

In the depths of the forest, the animals that cross Berthe's path are not described by medieval poets according to their physical appearance, but rather in relation to their symbolic representation. The place animals occupy in the *chanson de geste* increases, as Michel Zink notes, as the epic becomes more romanesque, accumulating the adventures and giving more room for the emotions.⁴¹ For instance, the owl she hears hooting is frightening because the animal is linked in the medieval bestiary to nocturnal fears, and represents the sinners and the numerous outlaws who flee the light of justice, seeking refuge in the forests.⁴² Later, the terrifying apparition of a she-bear embodies the image of uncontrolled anger crystallizing all the young girl's fears: powerless, she falls to the ground and faints:

Une ourse a encontree est une grant valee,
 Qui vers li s'en venoit corant gueule baee.
 Quant Berte l'a veüe, molt fu espoentee:
 "Aïde Dieus," fait ele, "qui fist la mer salee;
 Pere de paradis, or est ma vie outree!"
 De la paour qu'ele ot est cheüe pasmee, (1149–54)

[A bear she encountered in a big valley,
 Who was running towards her with her mouth wide-open.
 When Berthe saw her, she was very frightened:
 "Help me, God," she said, "who made the sea;

³⁹ Genevieve Bühler-Thierry, "La reine adultère," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 35 (1992): 299–312; here 300–01. For the first time, a queen's name (Judith, the second wife of Louis the Pious) appears in several instances in official documents (between 828–33) attesting thus to an increased role in government affairs.

⁴⁰ Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 3. See also Janet L. Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balhild in Merovingian History," *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978): 31–79; Douglas D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁴¹ Michel Zink, *Introduction à la littérature du Moyen Age* (see note 17), 50.

⁴² Claude Gaignebet and Dominique Lajoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age* (Vendôme: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 285.

Father in Heaven, my life is over!"
 She was so frightened, that she fell, unconscious,]

The bear, symbol of extreme savagery, will appear twice in the epic: first physically menacing Berthe's life, and later attacking her mother in a dream. This creature, dark and hairy, like the wild man, was a central figure in cult and mythologies in pagan Europe, but had become during the feudal period, according to Michel Pastoureau, the "the most diabolical of all animals."⁴³ Considered the lord of the forest and of all wild beasts, this once venerated creature was deposed by the advent of Christianity. Saint Augustine and the Church Fathers, threatened by pagan legends of the bear's power, demonized the animal that was later marked for death by the clergy. The bear was then supplanted in the bestiary first by the lion, crowned with the symbol of nobility, and later by the eagle.⁴⁴

Berthe's only positive encounter in the forest is with a hermit living near a fountain,⁴⁵ another recurrent trope in medieval literature. The presence of a religious man in the space of the forest reassures Berthe, but the recluse denies her entrance to his simple hut, since her presence would be a source of pollution and temptation in a life of solitude and contemplation. Nonetheless, he feeds her, and indicates the path back to civilization, a path on which she will meet Symon, a royal officer. While the male hero enters the forest of his own will, in search of adventure to test his courage and skills in solitary combat, his victory signals the end of the quest, and his return and reintegration to the court.

Berthe's wanderings, the result of a forced exile, are about self-discovery and transformation from a young girl unprepared for marriage to a mature woman ready to assume her duties as spouse and queen. The intense episode in the forest ends with the visit to the hermit, the holy man who puts her back on the right path. Her quest is about endurance and patience, two qualities she will apply to her new domestic life in Symon's house, where she will assume the traditional female role by spinning and making embroidery.

Symon and his family live on the fringe of the forest, which evokes by its geographical location a no-man's land between city and nature. In this rural setting that constitutes her new abode, the transformed Berthe no longer complains about her fate, but instead makes good use of her skills as a spinner and embroiderer to earn a living and gain a certain independence. Her mastery in these skills—this is also an important element of her legend—places her in a position of

⁴³ Michel Pastoureau, *The Bear: History of a Fallen King*, trans. George Holloch (2007; The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 2011), 115.

⁴⁴ Pastoureau, *The Bear* (see note 43), 127.

⁴⁵ Sautman, "L'Épopée taisible" (see note 22), 59. Water often signals the domain of the other world or the underworld in the Celtic tradition; see, for instance the presence of the fountain in Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain, le chevalier au lion*.

authority since Symon's two daughters become her apprentices. Spinning is a common and exclusive women's occupation of all ages and social condition, and thus symbolizes woman's work.⁴⁶ But the tools of the trade and woman's motion as she spins are sexually charged as the distaff has a suggestive feminine form and the spindle a definitively masculine one. In addition to the eroticism associated with this female occupation, spinning is also associated in folklore with the utterance of harmful words. Undeniably, the long evenings women spend spinning and gossiping are responsible for that dark aspect of their unceasing work. From that perspective, Berthe and the two girls form a singular spinning trio that can be perceived as the mythological *Fates*, which casts a negative shadow on their female labor.

While Berthe toils in her new life, her mother, after long years without news of her, has a premonitory dream, involving two highly symbolic animals, the bear and the eagle:

En dormant li sembloit que une ourse sauvage
Li menjoit le bras destre, le costé et la nage
Et uns aigles venoit seoir seur son visage. (1679–81)

[While sleeping, it seemed to her that a wild female bear
Was eating her right arm, her side and her buttock
And an eagle was sitting on her face.]

Blanchefleur's violent dream echoes Berthe's bear encounter in the forest. In her interpretation of the dream, she establishes a parallel between the animals' behavior and her own distress regarding her daughter's silence. The aggressiveness of the bear is often caused by the loss of her cubs, thus indirectly suggesting the disappearance or death of her own daughter. Dreams, following the Greco-Latin tradition, are used as literary devices in saints' *vitae*, and kings' visions.⁴⁷ Certainly, like Charlemagne's four dreams in the epic *La Chanson de Roland*,⁴⁸ Blanchefleur's dream functions as a premonition. The second animal in her dream, the eagle, suggests vigilance, which is a common symbolism in classical and medieval literature, associated with this predator's acute eyesight.⁴⁹ The warning she senses in the dream induces Blanchefleur to take action to save her daughter from a great danger. Accompanied by one hundred armed knights, the queen of Hungary leaves at Easter; her parental mission has the appearance of a military campaign.

⁴⁶ Dominique Cardon, "Arachné ligotée: la fileuse du Moyen Age face au drapier," *Médiévales* 30 (1996): 13–22; here 14–15.

⁴⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age: Temps, travail et culture en Occident, 18 essais* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1977), 299–306.

⁴⁸ See Joseph Bédier ed., *La Chanson de Roland* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1982).

⁴⁹ Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiae* XII, ed. Jacques André (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986), VII, 101.

In this epic, the active role in the two royal couples, Berthe-Pepin and Blanchefleur-Floire, is assigned to women, leaving the kings in the background. Berthe's mother displays evident signs of an independent character: "Et bien creans en Dieu et de tres bon corage" (1677) [And believing in God and being of great courage]. She is the force behind the search effort undertaken once her suspicion is confirmed that something has happened to Berthe. The first signs are the negative comments she hears about the new spouse of Pepin, and once she is introduced to the French court, she is repeatedly barred from seeing the bedridden queen. The great resemblance between the false queen and Berthe is not an obstacle for Blanchefleur since two important physical signs will betray Aliste, the impostor.

The obvious sign of Aliste's duplicity is, first, her acknowledgment that her facial complexion has turned yellow, light yellow as wax:

" . . . Mere," ce dist la serve, "je suefre tel martire
Que j'en sui aussi jaune devenue com cire . . . " (2116–17)

[Mother," said the serf, "I suffer such martyrdom
That I have become as yellow as wax]

The color yellow in medieval symbolism is highly charged since it was used in Christian iconography to represent Judas, the traitor, and was later assigned to Jews as a badge of recognition.⁵⁰ According to Michel Pastoureau, this color came to represent not only treason, but in its lighter shades, which is the one Adenet chooses to describe Aliste, embarrassment, disorder, hypocrisy, and envy.⁵¹ It is considered, along with red and green, to be the most ambivalent color, indicating a social transgression.⁵²

The second, and most visible sign of Aliste's usurpation of social status and power, and therefore being guilty of high treason, lies in the size of her feet.

⁵⁰ See Rosa Alvarez Perez, "Next-Door Neighbors: Aspects of Judeo-Christian Cohabitation in Medieval France," *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age* ed. Albrecht Classen, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2009), 309–29; here 315 n. 31, 32. See Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century* (New York: Hermon Press, 1966), 65–70. After the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Jews were forced to wear the *rouelle*, a unique piece of cloth to distinguish them from Christians. By the end of the Middle Ages, the color yellow was linked to disorder and madness: the buffoons and madmen were clothed in yellow. For a detailed list of decrees to enforce the Jewish badge or other marks of distinction, see Ulysse Robert, *Les Signes d'infamie au moyen âge: juifs, Sarrasins, hérétiques, lépreux, cagots et filles publiques*. Mémoires de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France, 49 (Paris: H. Champion, 1891). 112–27. For Jews and rural space, see the contributions to this volume by Birgit Wiedl and Eveline Brugger.

⁵¹ Michel Pastoureau, "Formes et couleurs du désordre : le jaune avec le vert," *Médiévales* 4 (1983): 62–73; here 69.

⁵² Michel Pastoureau, "Formes et couleurs du désordre" (see note 51), 69–70.

According to the most popular aspect of her legend, Berthe, the fair maiden, had very long feet, or webbed feet. This element of her physical appearance varies in accordance with the provenance of the tale. Adenet favors the oversized feet, signaling Berthe's defect very discreetly and in a very positive way since this sign will allow her mother to differentiate her from Aliste who has small feet. The poet mentions her imperfection at three key moments of the narrative: the first mention of this detail occurs when she is abandoned in the forest:

Par la forest dou Mans, si qu'il fut ajorné,
S'en va Berte as grans piez, n'i a plus demoré: (1075–76)

[Through the Forest of Le Mans, just after sunrise,
Goes the big footed Berte, who did not hesitate:]

In his portrayal of a courtly lady, Adenet is more inclined to choose the oldest version of the legend in which Berthe's feet are merely longer than average. In later versions, like the Spanish one,⁵³ webbed feet are preferred, adding a somber aspect to the Queen Berthe since in popular lore it is the sign of demonization, relegating her to the creatures of the underworld. Those versions may explain the frequent association made with the Queen Pedauque, the goose-footed queen.⁵⁴ But in Adenet's poem no negative emphasis is made about her feet; Berthe's imperfection matches Pepin's. He is described as short and ugly; later in life, he will suffer from gout, a painful ailment that is accompanied by the swelling of the foot,⁵⁵ thus sharing a common aspect with Berthe.

As Blanchefleur's arrival in Paris becomes imminent, Aliste's desperation grows since she is well aware that the queen will quickly uncover the plot. She pleads with her mother to flee, acknowledging her part in the betrayal that has cast away the young princess:

Bien sai que par mes piez conneües serons,
N'ai pas de la moitié tés piez ne tés talons
Comme ot Berte no dame que nous traïe avons, (1839–41)

[I know very well that by my feet we will be recognized,
My feet are not half the size of your feet or your heels
no other lady has feet like Berthe, who we have betrayed,]

⁵³ José Gómez Pérez, "Leyendas del ciclo carolingio en España," *Revista de literatura* XXVIII (1965): 5–18; here 17. See also Théodore Bachelet, *Dictionnaire général des lettres, des beaux-arts et des sciences morales et politiques* (Paris: Dezobry, 1862), 335; several churches in France have statues of Berthe (often assimilated to the queen Pédaque) in which she is represented with webbed feet: for instance on the portal of the churches of Le Mans, Nevers, and Saint Bénigne of Dijon.

⁵⁴ Gaignebet and Lajoux, *Art Profane* (see note 42), 102, 128.

⁵⁵ Gaignebet and Lajoux, *Art Profane* (see note 42), 102.

Conscious that the subterfuge is about to be uncovered, Margiste, presented as an archetypal sorceress, a stock device in medieval literature, reveals to her daughter that she had the intention of poisoning Blanchefleur and Pepin the Brief, and that her knowledge of poisons was transmitted to her by a Jewish woman, another recurrent trope in French literature, implying that Jewish negative influence permeated the social fabric through women:

“... A enherber m’aprist jadis une juise,
Mieus le sai ne set femme qui dusques en Frise;
Blancheflour traïrai en poire ou en cerise,
Dou venin serai tost pourveüe et pourquise.” (1830–34)

[To make poisons a long time ago a Jewess taught me
No woman knows how to better than me from here to Frise
Blancheflour will turn into a pear or cherry
Of venom I will soon be the purchaser and purveyor]

She indirectly represents the stereotypical Jewess, who is a brewer of poison.⁵⁶ While in other *chansons* Jews appear as stock liminal characters embodying evil and treason, Adenet introduces them in his epic in an implicit manner, through a serf woman. Aliste, the daughter, ambitious but more pragmatic, will be spared since she bore the king two children; she will instead be sent to a convent with them.

After the interval of the court scene, it is in the forest that the story unfolds and Berthe’s exile comes to an end. Pepin, absent from a substantial part of the epic, enters the stage to correct the injustice done to Berthe. The reunion of the royal couple is made possible through the deer, a royal emblem, and a providential animal in the Celtic tradition. In this allegorical representation, it will guide Pepin to Berthe. Long after Christianity had been firmly established, merging pagan beliefs and centers of worship with Christian doctrine and churches,⁵⁷ storytellers, and poets still return to the old cultural traditions for inspiration and imagery.⁵⁸ While the forest in the Middle Ages still belongs to the world of the pagan heritage, the margins of that world are marked with little chapels and oratories that leave numerous Christian imprints. Hermits also elect to live in this vegetal desert, a counterpart to the biblical one.

In this last episode taking place in the forest, Adenet combines two genres, the *pastourelle*, namely the encounter of a knight and a young girl of lower social status in a nature scene, wherein both hide their true identity, and a variant of the tale

⁵⁶ Perez, “Next-Door Neighbors” (see note 50), 328.

⁵⁷ Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age* (see note 47), 229.

⁵⁸ H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 12.

of "the man in search of his disappeared spouse."⁵⁹ The reunion takes place in the Spring, and more specifically at Pentecost,⁶⁰ another conventional trope in the literature of the period. Berthe, about to be raped by the king, divulges her identity, and by doing so brings the story to its end:

K'a la femme Pepin ne puissiez adaser:
Fille sui le roy Floire, de ce n'estuet douter,
Et fille Blancheflour, que Dieus puist honorer." (2732–34)

[Pepin's wife you could not touch;
Daughter of the king Floire I am, do not doubt it,
And daughter of Blancheflour, may God honor her."]

Conclusion

Berthe emerges triumphantly from her long exile and her life away from the court. Indeed, this obscure historical figure that became the material of a captivating legend by the twelfth century, and the object of numerous versions of the story in several countries has gained a popularity that very few characters in the *chansons de geste* like Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, would attain. Undoubtedly, her years of a humble living in a rural setting, working and sharing the hardships and joys of simple people, largely contributed to the popularity⁶¹ of the future queen. Her trial in the forest represents a key element of the legend, triggering a series of adventures pertaining to this wild and dark world, and in which Berthe will be associated with a number of folk tales that will enrich her own legend. The forest, personified by Adenet le Roi, contributes to the initiation and transformation of the young princess, revealing a new Berthe ready to assume her rightful place in society.

⁵⁹ Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (see note 3), Tale-type 400.

⁶⁰ Pentecost represents an important religious feast, but it is also a traditional date for the dubbing of young men as knights.

⁶¹ See note 8.

Chapter 13

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Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza* (1325?)

Juan Manuel (1282–1348) shows little interest in cities and city life in his books, and especially not in his *Libro de la caza* (1325?). It is known, in fact, from biographical sources and autobiographical references, that he preferred life in the country. That he did not describe the cities that were growing and becoming important economic and cultural centers underscores what is known about him, that he was afraid of any change that threatened his position as a wealthy noble landowner. He was happiest when he was in the country, where noble landowners of the old order like him could still hold on to traditions and customs that protected their status. As a wealthy landowner, he rooted himself firmly on the land that he owned. He traveled but never outside of Spain. In one of his autobiographical references he states that there is no bigger pleasure a man can have than to live in the country of which he is a native.¹

In another autobiographical reference he boasts that he is so wealthy that he could traverse Spain and each night sleep in one of his castles.² Juan Manuel's

¹ In chapter XXVI of *Libro del cauallero et del escudero*, he writes, "Cada vna de las plazenteras cosas que en el mundo ha [es] bevir omne en la tierra do es natural, et mayor mente si Dios li faze tanta merçed que puede bebir en ella onrado et preçiado" (*Obras completas* I, ed. José Manuel Blecua (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1982), 55: 10–13. ("One of the most enjoyable experiences in the world for a man is to live in his native land, especially if God grants him the favor of living there with honor and love.") The edition I use of *Libro de la caza* is also in *Obras completas* I, 509–96. All quotes are from this edition. All translations of quotes are mine, unless otherwise stated.

² In *Libro enfenido* he writes to his son, "Et otrosi de la vuestra heredad [podedes] mantener çerca de mill caualleros, sin bien fecho del rey, et podedes yr del reyno de Nauar[r]a fasta el reyno de Granada, que cada noche posedes en villa çercada o en castiellos de llos que yo he" (*Obras completas* I [see note 1], 162: 14–17). ("And about your inheritance, you are able to support financially one thousand knights, without the king's help, and you are able to travel from the kingdom of Navarra to the kingdom of Granada and every night sleep in a walled town or in a

identity was tied to his being a Castilian landowner who enjoyed his lifestyle in the countryside, and hunting for him was the best way to enjoy the outdoors. In fact, the author, an avid and experienced hunter, was happiest when he was hunting, as he states in his own hunting manual, *Libro de la caza*.³

In this article I discuss the *Libro de la caza* in four parts. In the first part I provide an introduction to Juan Manuel, his interest in hunting, and the problems concerning the book that the critics have addressed. In the second part I develop a number of these problems with more detail, mainly the problem of the method of composition. As has been discussed by many critics, it is not certain at all that Juan Manuel wrote the books that he authored. As demonstrated by Dennis Sennif, this book itself shows signs that the book making process entailed dictation.⁴ There are indeed, according to Reynaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, numerous possible scenarios of how his books were composed, but for the purposes of this study I take it for granted that, though Juan Manuel most likely did not write the *Libro de la caza* with his own hand, he is the author who was involved in the composition of the book at most stages if not every.⁵ I also address the problem of Juan Manuel as a reader and a writer, as can be gleaned from the book itself. In

castle that I own.”)

³ Beside Blecuá's edition of the *Libro de la caza*, which I am using, there are a few others, which I list in chronological order: *Libro de la caza* in *Los libros de cetrería de el Príncipe y el Canciller*, ed. José Gutiérrez de la Vega (Madrid: M. Tello, Biblioteca Venatoria Española 3, 1879), 137–44; *Libro de la caza*, ed. Gottfried Baist, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1880); *Libro de la caza*, ed. José María Castro y Calvo (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1945); *Libro de la caza* in *Cinco Tratados*, ed. Reynaldo Ayerbe-Chaux (Madison, Wisconsin: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1989), 177–251; *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza*, ed. José Manuel Fradejas Rueda (Tordesillas and Valladolid: Instituto de Estudios de Iberoamérica y Portugal, Seminario de Filología Medieval, 2001).

⁴ See Dennis Sennif's article, “‘Así fiz yo de lo lo que oy’: Orality, Authority, and Experience in Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, *Libro infinido*, and *Libro de las armas*,” *Josep Maria Solà-Solé: Homage, homenaje, homenatge: miscellanea de estudios de amigos y discípulos*, ed. Antonio Torres-Alcalá, Josep M. Sola-Solé, Victorio G. Agüera, and Nathaniel B Smith. Biblioteca universitaria Puvill, V. Estudios misceláneos, 1 (Barcelona: Puvill, 1984), 1: 91–109. Reprinted in *Noble Pursuits: Literature and the Hunt. Selected Articles by Dennis Sennif*, ed. Diane M. Wright and Connie L. Scarborough (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1992), 33–58. Manuel Cardenal de Iracheta also suggested Juan Manuel's dictation procedure in 1948 in his article, “La geografía conquense del *Libro de la caza*,” *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 54 (1948): 27–49; reprinted in *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 11–30; here 12: “Es muy probable que don Juan Manuel ya compusiera sus obras dictándolas, lo que se desprende incluso de algunos pasajes de las mismas, y muy particularmente en el *Libro de la caza*.” (“It is very probable that Juan Manuel composed his books by dictation, which can be observed in a number of passages in the books, especially in *Libro de la caza*.”)

⁵ See Reynaldo Ayerbe-Chaux in *Cinco Tratados* (see note 3), xliii–xlvi. Ayerbe-Chaux also rejects the possibility that Juan Manuel wrote the *Libro de la caza* by himself and delineates four different possible composition methods that he could have followed. In the second part of this article (notes 25 and 36) I refer with more detail to Ayerbe-Chaux's opinion on this subject.

addition, I also take into account the scribe or scribes who were most probably involved in the process. In the third part of the article, I focus on what Fradejas Ruedas called the anecdotal part of the treatise, the third person interjections (proof for Cardenal de Iracheta, Dennis Sennif, and Ayerbe-Chaux of the orality of the text) in which Juan Manuel's recalls personal experiences relating to hunting.⁶ I conclude with some general comments about the *Libro de la caza* in relation to the project of education for aristocratic males that Juan Manuel embarked on when he began composing books.

I. Introduction

By composing his *Libro de la caza* (ca. 1325?) Juan Manuel gave testimony that being a man, an aristocrat, a hunter and a composer of books were for him inseparable and dependent on one another. There were, in fact, a number of factors in place that contributed to the making of the book, like gender, class, literary genre, book making practices and the author's own life experiences.

Among Castilian nobles of the first half of the fourteenth century, he alone, as far as we know, composed books. As he mentions in his book *Libro enfindido*, most of his fellow noblemen preferred to play darts in their free time. He chose to make books.⁷ His fellow noblemen also hunted as their birthright, yet since they preferred playing darts to interacting with books (reading or writing, or being read to or dictating), a written manual on hunting was probably not to be expected from them.

In other words, if there was going to be a manual on hunting written in Castile in the first half of the fourteenth century, this man who liked to interact with books was likely to compose one (or have one composed), because he also loved the sport of hunting. Certainly it was highly unlikely, if not out of the question, that a noblewoman would write or compose one. It is believed that noblewomen did participate in hunting expeditions, but it was predominantly a sport for males.⁸

⁶ See José Manuel Fradejas Rueda, *Literatura Cetrera de la Edad Media y del Renacimiento*, (London: Queen Mary and Westfield College, Department of Hispanic Studies, 1998), 25: "Sin embargo, los textos castellanos introducen otra novedad: la anécdota. Con ella aligeran la pesadez de la doctrina venatoria y farmacológica por medio de la introducción de hechos acaecidos a los autores a lo largo de su experiencia como cazadores y cetreros." ("However, the Castilian texts introduce a novelty, the anecdote. The anecdotes counteract the seriousness of the doctrinal material on cynegetics and pharmacology by introducing experiences that the authors had as hunters and falconers.")

⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 182–83: 28–31.

⁸ See John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: the Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 8. Cummins writes, "Clearly there was female participation in certain forms of

What does set the author apart from other nobles was that he did dedicate himself to composing books, one after the other. What factors contributed to this development beside the personal will to do so? Perhaps the number one factor was that, as we suggested above, he liked to interact with books, especially his uncle's, Alfonso X the Wise.

Alfonso X died in 1284, when Juan Manuel was almost two years old, so he did not get to know him personally. At some stage in his life (probably as an adult), he most probably involved himself intensely (reading or listening to) with his uncle's encyclopedic books on law, the sciences, history and recreational activities like indoor games such as chess and dice and outdoor sports such as hunting and fishing.⁹ (I say "probably" because we do have to keep in mind that the "learned" aspects of the books might not all necessarily be of Manueline input, but rather the scribe's or scribes'. That is, the scribe(s) could have been, of the two, the more learned party, not necessarily Juan Manuel.)

Juan Manuel's first book was indeed *Crónica abreviada*, which is, chapter by chapter, a summary of a version of Alfonso X's chronicle, *Estoria de España*, which is known as *Crónica manuelina*, according to Diego Catalán. This *Crónica manuelina* which Juan Manuel handled is now lost and can only be reconstrued with the *Crónica abreviada*.¹⁰ Writing on the *Crónica abreviada*, Diego Catalán showed how Juan Manuel composed his book for auto-didactic purposes. It is as if Juan Manuel

hunting, especially falconry, and female interest in other forms, but for women to take part in the rigours of classic *par force* hunting, as opposed to its social preliminaries and aftermath, must have been a rarity." See also Juan Manuel Fradejas Rueda, "La caza en el palacio de los reyes católicos," *Filología y lingüística: estudios ofrecidos a Antonio Quilis*, Vol.II (Madrid and Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Superiores, 2005), 1953–64; here 1955. Fradejas Rueda shows that women in the court of Isabel la Católica participated in the sport of falconry.

⁹ See Germán Orduna, "Los prólogos a la *Crónica abreviada* y al *Libro de la caza*: La tradición alfonsí y la primera época en la obra literaria de don Juan Manuel," *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, LI–LII (1970): 123–44; here 133. Reprinted in *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 105–20. According to Germán Orduna, in the library that Juan Manuel possessed or had access to there were not only books composed by his uncle the king, but also copies of Alphonsine editions that predated the king's death, and that are now lost: "*La Crónica abreviada* y el *Libro de la caza* han tomado hoy, para la crítica histórica y literaria, un valor del que originalmente estaban exentos. Son documentos que permiten conocer ciertos libros de creación alfonsí—hoy perdidos—en la forma más próxima a la que habrían tenido en tiempos de Alfonso. La biblioteca que don Juan Manuel poseía o podía consultar contaba—a juzgar por lo que conocemos—con copias tomadas de versiones anteriores a la muerte de Alfonso." ("The *Crónica abreviada* and the *Libro de la caza* have an importance today for literary critics and historians which they did not have originally. They are documents that allow us to know about earlier versions, now lost, of certain books that were composed in the Alphonsine workshops. Juan Manuel's library, or the library that he had access to, contained, to the best of our knowledge, copies of editions of books that were composed before Alfonso X's death.")

¹⁰ Diego Catalán, "Don Juan Manuel ante el modelo alfonsí," *Juan Manuel Studies*, ed. Ian MacPherson (London: Tamesis Press, 1977), 17–51; here 20.

decided to learn the history of Spain by reading (or listening to a reading of) his uncle's book; writing or dictating summaries of the chapters helped him secure the learning process. It could be also that he wanted a more abbreviated version that would be easier to handle. That's what "*crónica abreviada*" means, abbreviated chronicle.¹¹ Again, considering the method of the composition it is not certain how much or how little Juan Manuel participated in the composition of the book. What matters for us is that Juan Manuel did participate in its creation by way of interacting more personally with the material and by ordering a scribe to copy down his thoughts and ideas.

Juan Manuel's second surviving book is *Libro de la caza*. There has been some debate about whether it does belong to the first stage of the author's literary career, whether it is indeed one of the first books. Germán Orduna addresses this question and, refuting Gimenez Soler's opinion that the book was written late in the author's career, he concludes convincingly that the book went through two main stages of composition, an early stage characterized by admiration for and emulation of his uncle Alfonso X, and a later stage of more independence and maturity.¹²

The prologue begins with praise for Alfonso X and his books. The narrator explains that Juan Manuel (discussed below is this relationship between the narrator and Juan Manuel) found his uncle's writings on hunting to be particularly interesting and useful to him, because he himself loves to hunt, so he decided to compose his own book on the subject, borrowing the theory that he found in his uncle's texts, that is useful to him and could be also useful to other hunters of his generation who have no knowledge of this theory, and adding to the theory, in order to back it up or contradict it, his own first hand experience, along with the first hand experience of his teachers and fellow companions in the sport.

Like with many medieval writers, Juan Manuel (and his scribes) was not concerned with clarifying what his exact sources were and where and how he uses them. He only states that he used some of his uncle's material. He provides no titles, except for *Crónicas de España* and a book on chivalry. He also affirms that his uncle wrote many books in which he described hunting big game, falconry and fishing. The question is, what books are these? We can believe him and identify the chronicles as these books. We can also include where the king wrote on chivalry,

¹¹ See Diego Catalán, "Don Juan Manuel ante el modelo alfonsí" (see note 10), 26: "Vemos también que, en un principio, el propósito de don Juan, al 'sacar' de la Crónica o Estoria de España de Alfonso X 'vna obra menor', fue solo hacer más fácil su tarea de lector, poder asimilar mejor el contenido de la obra 'cumplida'." ("We also see that at the beginning, Juan Manuel's purpose for extracting from Alfonso X's Chronicle or Estoria de España a "smaller book" was to make reading an easier task so he could better assimilate the content of the bigger book.")

¹² See Germán Orduna, "Los prólogos a la *Crónica abreviada* y al *Libro de la caza*: La tradición alfonsí y la primera época en la obra literaria de don Juan Manuel" (see note 9); here 119.

in Title 22 of the *Second Partida* “De los cavalleros et de las cosas que les conviene fazer.”

What are these possible books on hunting by (or used by) Alfonso Xth? José Manuel Fradejas Rueda identified one of these books, the *Libro de las animalias que cazan*, or *Libro de Moamím* (*Book on Animals that Hunt* or *Moamym's Book*).¹³ This book is actually a translation of an Arabic manual, *Kitab al-Yawarih* by Muhamad ibn Habdallah Ibn Humar al-Bayzar, a writer on many subjects who lived in Baghdad around the end of the ninth century. According to Fradejas Rueda, the Castilian king had the Arabic book translated when he was still a prince. Anthony Cardenas, however, after a detailed analysis of the two manuscripts in Spanish and an examination of the proofs provided by Seniff and Fradejas Rueda, concludes that, “The reasons thus far adduced for claiming Alphonsine sponsorship for the superb codex RES 270 are not convincing. Date and sponsorship of this codex remain unsolved problems and challenges for today's scholars.”¹⁴

Both books, the translation from the Arabic and Juan Manuel's own book, are actually not manuals on hunting in general, but more precisely, manuals on falconry. Falconry is the hunting of wild quarry in its natural state and habitat with trained birds of prey. *Libro de las animalias de la caza* is the first book on falconry in Spain. Juan Manuel's book is the second one. The third one is *Libro de la caza de las aves*, written in 1385 or 1386 by Pero López de Ayala, who read and cited Juan Manuel's manual. And the fourth one is Viscount Rocaberti's *Llibre de cetreria*, which was written in Catalan around 1390. The *Libro de Montería*, composed possibly by King Alfonso XI around 1345 (see note 14), is not a manual on falconry but on hunting in general, especially, the hunting of big game like bear and wild boar.¹⁵

¹³ See José Manuel Fradejas Rueda, “Las fuentes del *Libro de la caza* de don Juan Manuel,” *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 63–68. Fradejas Rueda identifies five books on falconry that are the “muchos libros buenos” of Alfonso X that Juan Manuel refers to, but only one of them is Fradejas certain about as a source that Juan Manuel used, the mentioned *Libro de los animales que cazan*. The other four books are: *Libro de cetrería* by the falconer Gerardo (lost?), the *Libro de cetrería* by the king Dancos (Sicilia), the *Libro de los halcones* by master Guillermo (from Sicilia), and the *Libro de los azores* (anonymous, part of it is of Arabic origen and part of it is of Latin origin). Fradejas Rueda also states that there are echoes of king Dancos' *Libro de cetrería* in Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*.

¹⁴ Anthony Cardenas, “A Medieval Spanish Version of the Book of Moamin: Observations on Date and Sponsorship,” *Manuscripta* 31 (1987): 166–80; here 180.

¹⁵ There is a longstanding debate about the authorship of the *Libro de la Montería*. Some critics believe it was composed during Alfonso X's reign. Others believe that it was composed during Alfonso XI's reign. Still others support two composition stages, one during each reign. Important to this article on the *Libro de la caza* is the possibility that the *Libro de Montería* be indeed the *Tratado de venación* by Alfonso X, which is the opinion of José Amador de los Ríos and Felipe Benicio Navarro. For a summary of the debate, see Maria Isabel Montoya Ramirez's introduction to her

Guiseppe di Stefano has suggested another possible connection, one between Juan Manuel's book and another earlier manual on falconry, possibly the greatest manual of all, the one produced by the German emperor Frederick von Hohenstaufen in 1241, *Arte venandi cum avibus* (*The Art of Hunting with Birds*).¹⁶ (This manual has beautiful illustrations. The marginalia has 170 human figures, more than 900 species of birds, 12 horses and 36 other animals plus all the paraphernalia needed for falconry.)¹⁷ Alfonso X's mother, Beatriz of Swabia, and Frederick II (1194–1250) were cousins.¹⁸

There are indeed questions that have not been entirely answered concerning the relationship between Moamym's book, Frederick's book *De arte venandi cum avibus*, the *Libro de las animalias de la caza* (which may or may not be of Alphonsine sponsorship) and Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*. Moamym's book was translated into Latin at the court of Frederick II by Master Theodore of Antioch, the

critical edition of the book, *Libro de la Montería* (Granada: Publicaciones de la Cátedra de Historia de la Lengua Española, Universidad de Granada, 1992), pp?.

¹⁶ See Guiseppe di Stefano, "Don Juan Manuel nel suo *Libro de la caza*," *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, 31 (1965): 379–90; here 382, n. 12. "Ma e probabile che esse risalgano, direttamente o per mediazione degli scritti alfonsini o di altra fonte, al trattato *De arte venandi cum avibus* de Federico II" Article reprinted in Spanish, "Don Juan Manuel en su *Libro de la caza*," in *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 49–56; here 51, n. 6: "Pero es probable que se remontan directamente o a través de los escritos alfonsíes o de otra fuente, al tratado *De arte venandi cum avibus* de Federico II"

¹⁷ See "Translator's Introduction," *The Art of Falconry Being the De Arte Venandi cum Avibus of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen*, ed. Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1943), xxxix. "The imperial author, in writing and compiling the *De Arte Venandi*, utilized several sources of knowledge, among them works on natural history, treatises on falconry, and, last but not least, his own observations, experiments, and personal inquiries. The most important literary source available for his purposes (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) was Aristotle's nineteen books on animal life, his *De Animalibus Historia*, his *Partibus Animalium*, and his *De Generatione Animalium*. Frederick's references to zoological authority are almost entirely confined to Aristotle, whom he generally mentions by name." See also *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen*, ed. C. A. Willemsen (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1969) for a more modern facsimile. The text is in Latin and the commentary is in German. For a good collection of articles on science and society during the reign of Frederick II, see *Natura, scienze e società medievali II, Le scienze alla corte di Federico II / Sciences at the Court of Frederick II* (Tavarnuzze, Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1994).

¹⁸ Frederick II was the son of Henry VI (1165–1197) and Constance of Hauteville (1154–1198). Henry VI was Holy Roman emperor 1191–1197, King of Germany 1169–1191, and King of Sicily 1194–1197. Elizabeth of Hohenstaufen (Beatriz de Suavia), Alfonso X's mother, was daughter of Philip of Hohenstaufen (King of Germany 1198–1208, Duke of Swabia 1196–1208, and Duke of Spoleto from 1195) and Irene Angela (Maria), daughter of Isaac II Angelus, Emperor of Byzantium, and his first wife Irene Komnena, daughter of emperor Andronicus I Komnenus (1183–1185). Henry VI and Philip of Hohenstaufen were brothers. Online: "The Descendants of Frederick Barbarossa," http://abitofhistory.net/html/descendants/frederick_barbarossa.htm (last accessed on Jan. 3, 2012).

emperor's interpreter, and was called the *De Scientia Venandi per Aves*.¹⁹ Where does this Latin translation fit in, if at all, with the *Libro de las animalias de la caza* and the *Libro de la caza*? In either event, Moamym's book is a source twice removed or three times removed in the sequence of translations, from the Arabic to the Spanish, or from the Arabic, to the Latin to the Spanish.

Juan Manuel's own book is incomplete. As it stands now, it has twelve chapters on falconry. However, the author's original intent was to add a second part on hunting big game. "Pero toda la arte del benar poner se a en este libro despues que fuere acabado (el) del arte de caçar."²⁰ ("But all that pertains to the art of hunting big game will be put in this book after finishing the part dedicated to the art of falconry.") The book on falconry itself is also incomplete, ending abruptly at the moment the author states that he is now going to describe the riverbanks in Osma, which is in Soria. How to explain this incompleteness? Did Juan Manuel compose a book on hunting big game or not? Why is the book on falconry itself incomplete? I address this problem, along with the problem of the scribe, in the second part of this article.

The author's interest in composing the book was indeed strongly related to his interest in his own education and in education for aristocratic males in general. Hunting big game and falconry were sports that were prescribed for the young aristocratic male's education.²¹ Juan Manuel composed a book later on, *Libro de los estados*, part of which resembles a Mirror of Princes, a distinct medieval genre that

¹⁹ "Translator's Introduction," *The Art of Falconry* (see note 17), xlix.

²⁰ *Obras completas I* (see note 1), 521: 76–78.

²¹ Juan Manuel's own aversion to laziness can be seen in various passages on education. Hunting, as well as other pastimes, like tournaments, provides physical exercise that ward off laziness. Frederick II himself stated that laziness and hunting did not mix: "The successful falconer, says Frederick, cannot be careless nor lazy, because his art demands much study and much labor. It is with pride in his mastery of this sport in its higher aspects and not as a mere boast that he says, in the preface to his monograph, "*nos semper dileximus et exercuimus*." "Translator's Introduction," *The Art of Falconry* (see note 17), xlii. Also see John Cummins, his introduction to *The Hound and the Hawk: the Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 173. Cummins quotes a passage in Pedro López de Ayala's *Libro de la caza de las aves* in which the Chancellor also views hunting as an essential pastime to ward off idleness: All men "should avoid idleness, for it causes sin; when man is not occupied in good and honest things, thoughts are born in his heart from which arise misery and mortification, and from this misery comes desperation, which is the root of damnation. It also brings evil to the body, for when a man is idle, without exercising his limbs and experiencing changes of air, his bodily humours grow stale and he is subject to sickness and diseases. . . To avoid these evils, those engaged in the education of the sons of kings and princes thought it good that they should go through the countryside for a few hours every day, taking fresh air and exercise." According to Cummins, there is at the other opposite end the danger of developing an obsession with hunting that leads in turn to neglecting duties. Juan Manuel writes about this danger, and so do Alfonso X and John of Portugal in his *Livro da montaria*.

intends to teach wisdom to future men of power, whether they be kings or aristocrats.²²

Juan Manuel also explains how a young prince or aristocrat should be educated. In fact, it is the education that he himself received growing up that he puts forth as a model, and hunting is an essential part of this education. He started hunting as a little boy. He writes in chapter LXVII that as soon as a boy is strong enough he should ride a horse every day no matter how bad the weather is. He should wear the necessary heavy clothing no matter how small he is, so he will become accustomed to it. In his right hand he should carry the spear or rod, and in the left hand he should carry a falcon or a goshawk, so his arms will become strong. Hunting will also prepare the boy to fight in battles as soon as he is able to. The author participated in his first battle against the Moors when he was twelve years old.

Alfonso X's *Second Partida* also resembles a Mirror of Princes in that it details the responsibilities and privileges of the king. Law 10 (Title VII) details the manner in which the king's male children should be educated. Riding horses, hunting and playing games and sports are all necessary.²³ In Law 20 (Title V) hunting is defined as the art or knowledge of waging war and conquering. ("La caza es el arte o sabiduría de guerrear y de vencer.") In this same law it is stated that the king should be an able hunter because it is good exercise, a healthy pastime and an effective distraction from responsibilities and problems.²⁴

No doubt Juan Manuel participated in hunting and falconry because it was expected of him as a member of the Castilian royal family. His grandfather Fernando III, his uncle Alfonso X, and his father Don Manuel were able and avid falconers. The author, a few years after writing the *Libro de la caza*, wrote his famous collection of stories, the *El Conde Lucanor*, of which story 33 is based on a hunting experience of his father, "De lo que contesçio a vn falcon sacre del infante don Manuel con vna aguila et con vna garça," ("Of that which happened to a Falcon and a Heron, and, more particularly, to a cunning Falcon, which belonged to the Infant Don Manuel.") Yet, as we mentioned earlier, hunting for him was more than part of his aristocratic upbringing, more than an aristocratic pastime; it was a passion and a skill in which he excelled.

²² See Adeline Rucquoi and Hugo O. Bizarri, "Los Espejos de Príncipe en Castilla: entre Oriente y Occidente," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* (online) 79.1 (2005): 7–30; last accessed on Jan. 6, 2012. For a general article on the genre, see Cristian Bratu, "Mirrors for Princes (Western)," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen, vol. III (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1921–50.

²³ *Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio cotejadas con varios codices antiguos por La Real Academia de la Historia*, Tomo II. *Partida Segunda y Tercera* (Madrid: Madrid en la Imprenta Real, 1807), 52.

²⁴ *Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio* (see note 23), 40.

Given this passion and expertise, it is not surprising that one of the longest chapters (chapter XXXXI) in a subsequent book he wrote, *Libro del cauallero et del escudero*, is the one on birds. He divides the birds and two categories, those that hunt and those that are hunted, and enthusiastically describes them in detail. The author's knowledge of birds is impressive, especially compared to his knowledge of herbs in another chapter, of which he confesses to know very little. In effect, this chapter (XXXIII) is for that reason very short.

Let us return to the *Libro de la caza*. With the majority of the third person references to himself in which he quotes himself (or is quoted) Juan Manuel interjects examples of personal experiences with falconry. This is not to say that the rest of the material is not also based on personal experience. In fact, it is difficult to know what is not. In any event, the interjections testify to the author's expertise in all aspects of falconry. There are even places where the author can't refrain from boasting. In chapter IX he boasts that he can train in only two months a falcon to kill its prey on its own; he has done so many times.²⁵ He remembers in particular a falcon that was named "Picardit" that he trained and gave as a gift to king Fernando IV.

Another aspect of the *Libro de la caza* that is interesting is how it portrays the male bonding that takes place in the sport of falconry. We have males bonding in hunting parties. The author remembers specific hunting expeditions and names the individuals who participated. Then there is the bonding between the hunters of the past, the hunters in the present and the hunters of the future. The book itself is viewed as a space where they can all meet. It is not surprising that don Juan Manuel recounts hunting experiences of family members who had died when he wrote the book: his grandfather Fernando III, his uncle Alfonso X, his uncle Don Enrique, his own father Don Manuel, and his cousin don Juan, the best hunter of them all. If his father died when he was not even two years old, how did he hear these stories? Older hunters who know his father personally told him the stories. The author learned falconry with their priceless instruction and stories.

Perhaps the key word to understand the book is change. In a key passage Juan Manuel states that the practices of falconry change from one generation to the next. He hopes that he has done a good job of describing the hunting practices of his father's generation and those of his own generation. He adds that if he becomes aware of any other changes in the present generation of younger hunters he will have them added to the book.

²⁵ According to Robin S. Oggins, it was very rare that a nobleman trained his own hawks: "Consequently, upper-class owners delegated training of their hawks to others, and not all men who flew falcons knew how to tame and train them." *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 10.

Developing his own voice of authority in the *Libro de la caza* (either by writing or dictating) gave Juan Manuel confidence to develop further his career as a composer of books. He discovered that what he had to contribute was his personal knowledge of life as a Castilian nobleman: his knowledge on hunting and falconry, nature, astrology, education for males, knighthood, estate management, politics, warfare, power struggles, heraldry, problem solving and storytelling.

II. The Scribe and Juan Manuel: Composition Methods

The problem of the methods that were followed in the composition of the *Libro de la caza* can be addressed by looking at how Juan Manuel is represented in the very same book as participant in the composition of the book. He participated by reading, conversing with hunters and falconers, writing, and dictating to the scribe(s). Looking at this problem requires that we look at the prologue as a separate text from the book. Indeed, the prologue, as we shall see, was composed in a different fashion. Looking at the problem of the methods of composition also requires that we again discuss the problem of the incomplete nature of the book, because they are related.

While the reader can sense Juan Manuel dictating in the body of the *Libro de la caza* (this will especially be evident in the third and fourth parts of this article), in the prologue the reader is presented with images of Juan Manuel as a reader and a writer. However, it is likely, if not certain, that Juan Manuel did not write the prologue but rather a scribe (or scribes) did.²⁶ In this event, it is the scribe who, remaining anonymous, paints Juan Manuel as a reader and writer. The prologue then gives us sufficient information to know 1) that Juan Manuel did not write the

²⁶ See Reynaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, *Cinco Tratados de don Juan Manuel* (see note 3), here xliii–xliv. It is Ayerbe-Chaux's opinion that Juan Manuel did not write the *Libro de la caza* (or any of his books, except one) by his own hand, but rather he commissioned it and dictated it: "En primer lugar se debe excluir la posibilidad de que don Juan Manuel escribiera el tratado directamente él mismo, en la soledad y silencio de su mesa de trabajo, distanciando su yo hasta el punto de convertirse él en el escriba anónimo. Como se dijo arriba, los nobles no escribían ellos directamente sino que dictaban; para eso tenían una chancillería. Sólo el *Libro de los proverbios*, verdadero ejercicio de retórica, debió ser escrito directamente por don Juan Manuel. En la rica colección diplomática que de él nos queda, sólo hay una carta escrita de su puño y letra." ("In the first place we need to reject the possibility that don Juan Manuel wrote the treatise himself, in silent solitude sitting at his desk, distancing his 'I' from himself to the point of becoming an anonymous scribe. As was mentioned above, nobles did not write themselves, rather they dictated their material; this is why they had a chancery. The only book that don Juan Manuel most probably wrote himself was *Libro de los proverbios*, which is a veritable exercise in rhetoric. From the rich collection of his letters that have survived, only one was written by his own hand.")

prologue and 2) what composition methods Juan Manuel and his scribe(s) followed in composing the book.

The narrator/scribe writes that Juan Manuel likes to read his uncle's books ("se paga mucho de leer en los libros que falla que compuso el dicho rey") and he has read his chronicles, his book on knighthood and his books on hunting with falcons, hunting big game and fishing. In chapter XII Juan Manuel is again represented as a reader. The narrator states that Juan Manuel composed this part of the book where he (Juan Manuel) names and describes the places that are good or bad for hunting, so that he can *read* the names of places in case he does forget them:

Et esto fizo don Iohan por que quando el acesçiese en algunas de las tierras que en este libro son escriptas et se non acordare de los nonbres de las riberas o de los pasos o de los lugares, que los pueda saber leyendo en este libro . . .²⁷

[And don Juan did this so that he could use the book himself. If he found himself in any of these lands and could not remember the names of the riverbanks or the spots or places, he could recall them by reading this book.]

What does the narrator say about Juan Manuel as the writer of the book? There are two instances in which the narrator states that Juan Manuel had it written, we can assume, by another: "fizo escribir,"²⁸ "fizo la escriuir en este libro."²⁹ Yet, as mentioned above, later in the same paragraph the narrator states that Juan Manuel wrote down ("escriuiolo") the information on hunting big game that he gathered from his conversations with other hunters. One can understand that Juan Manuel would indeed have wanted to be painted as a man who reads and writes, yet one is left confused. What is one to believe? How indeed did Juan Manuel participate in writing the book?

In order to help answer the problem of Juan Manuel's participation in the composition of the book entailing possibly writing, I return to the matter of the incomplete book. Guiseppe di Stefano believes that Juan Manuel did not write (or dictate) a second part on hunting big game, because he had no interest in hunting big game.³⁰ This is definitely the case for fishing, which Juan Manuel did not seem

²⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 578: 5–9.

²⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 520: 47.

²⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 63.

³⁰ "Don Juan Manuel en su *Libro de la caza*," *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3 and 16); here 50: "No es fácil comprobar si trató la montería: el *Libro de la caza* nos ha llegado incompleto y se interrumpe aproximadamente en el medio de un capítulo que parecería el último de la parte sobre la halconería, como un apéndice dedicado a la descripción de los lugares idóneos para la cetrería. La imprecisión del Prólogo lleva a suponer una exclusión de la montería: don Juan escribe en un pasaje que *la ha tratado* y, más adelante, que *la tratará* después de la cetrería (Baist, 1880: 3–25 and 4–3); hasta que tampoco está claro si la elaboración del Prólogo precedió o siguió a la de la obra. Es verosímil que la caza mayor no haya provocado mucho entusiasmo en don Juan Manuel, a juzgar por la escasez de referencias a ella en sus escritos, mientras que recuerda

to like, and for which reason he did not include any material on fishing: "Et quanto de la arte del pescar non lo fizo escriuir por que touo que non fazia mengua."³¹ ("And as to fishing, he did not order anything written on this sport, because he did not deem it necessary.") As to why the first part on falconry is incomplete, Denis Menjot believes it was a boundless work in progress: "qui'l n'a peut-être jamais terminé car elle dépassait ses moyens."³² Dennis Seniff, on the other hand, believes that the only available manuscript is incomplete, but that the source (the original manuscript) was complete:

Despite the indication in the *Libro de la caza* that there is little room for its improvement (p. 46), the only extant version of the work is, ironically, incomplete. Chapter xii of Bib. Nac. MS 6376 was to have provided complete information for falconry locations in the bishoprics of Cartagena, Cuenca, Sigüenza, Osma, Palencia, Burgos, Calahorra, León, Salamanca, Avila, Segovia, Toledo, Jaén, Cordoba, Sevilla; and in the lands of the Order of Santiago, "que ellos llaman tierra de León" (p. 68). In reality, only the first three bishoprics are examined, and the codex ends (fol. 217r) on a note which previews material of a chapter that clearly existed in an earlier source text: "Dira daqui adelante de las riberas que el / Don Juan/ sabe en el obispdo de Osma" (p. 89). As a consequence, hundreds of toponymic references have been lost, and our knowledge of what must have been the bulk of Juan Manuel's falconry manual has been greatly limited.³³

Dennis Sennif refers here to the falconry manual. About the second part on hunting big game, do I agree with Guiseppe di Stefano that this material was never developed? Why is it stated then in the prologue that included in the book is what Juan Manuel wrote on hunting big game, material that is based on his conversations with experienced hunters of big game, Sancho Ximenes de Lanchares, Garcy Alvarez and his son Ferrant Gomez, Roy Ximenes de Mesco, and

con frecuencia la cetrería." ("It is not easy to prove if the author included material on hunting big game or not: the *Libro de la caza* has come to us incomplete and it is interrupted approximately in the middle of a chapter that looks like the last chapter pertaining to falconry, a chapter that looks like an appendix in which are described the recommended places for the sport. The prologue itself is imprecise about the exclusion or inclusion of the material on hunting big game. In one passage don Juan states that he has included it and in another passage he states that he will include it after the material on falconry (Baist, 1880: 3–25 and 4–3); it's not even clear if the composition of the prologue took place before or after the composition of the little book. It is very possible that the subject of hunting big game did not elicit a lot of enthusiasm in don Juan Manuel, judging by how few references he makes to the sport in all his books, compared to the frequency he finds opportunities to write about falconry.")

³¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521–22: 8–81.

³² "Juan Manuel: auteur cynégétique", *Don Juan Manuel: VII centenario* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1982), 199–213, 213. Spanish version of article is found in *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 91–104.

³³ "All the King's Men and all the King's Lands: the Nobility and Geography of the *Libro de la caza* and the *Libro de la montería*," *Noble Pursuits: Literature and the Hunt* (see note 4), 1–14; here 9.

other hunters from Galicia and Castile?³⁴ These are three different assertions: that Juan Manuel had conversations with big game hunters, that he did recapture these conversations in writing, and that they are included in this book. This is contradicted a few lines down when the narrator writes that the part of hunting big game will be put in the book after the book on falconry is completed: “Pero toda la arte del benar poner se a en este libro despues que fuere acabado (el) del arte de caçar.”³⁵ (“But everything pertaining to the sort of hunting big game will be put in the book after finishing what pertains to the sport of hunting with falcons.”)

Recalling German Orduna’s theory that the *Libro de la caza* was written in at least two different stages (separated by years) in the author’s literary career, I see these contradictions in the prologue as proof that the narrator/scribe had different texts before him that were composed at different times and that he now had the task of putting together. One could understand them as notes. That is, Juan Manuel did write down notes on his conversations with hunters. At another time, or as a work in progress, he had a scribe (or scribes) write notes on his uncle’s material on hunting, with his participation and input. This would explain “fizo escriuir algunas cosas.”

Perhaps it is the editing, the cementing and arrangement of the parts and the filling in the gaps, that the scribe has not completed when he states that the book on hunting big game will be included (that is, edited and perfected) after he completes the part on falconry. Juan Manuel has already done his part, in terms of writing. (I discuss the dictation process later in this article.) This would mean that the prologue was not written after the book was completed, but while the scribe and Juan Manuel were still working on completing it. Perhaps they did not finish putting it all together, which would mean that there is no lost manuscript

³⁴ On this subject see Guiseppe Di Stefano, “Don Juan Manuel en su *Libro de la caza*,” (see note 16), 50. From the prologue I quote the passage: “Et lo que el entendio et acordo con los mejores caçadores con quien el departio muchas vegadas sobre esto, et otrosi lo que fallo en la arte de venar, que quiere dezir la caca de los venados que se caçan e el monte, escriuiolo en este libro segund lo acordo con Sancho Ximenes de Lanchares et con Garcy Aluarez et con Roy Ximenes de Mesco et con Ferrant Gomes, fijo del dicho Garcy Aluarez, et con otros caualleros de Galicia que saben mucho desta arte et co otros moneros que andan en casa del rey nuestro sennor et con don Iohan et con estos omnes bonos dichos que saben destar arte. Pero toda la arte del benar poner se a en este libro despues que fuere acabado [el] del arte de caçar” (521: 69–80). “And about the sport of hunting with falcons, he wrote down in this book what he conferred with the best hunters, whom he had many conversations with about the sport; he also wrote down in this book what he found out about venery, which is the sport of hunting game animals in the hills and mountains, in his conversations with Sancho Ximenes de Lanchares, Garcy Aluarez, Roy Ximenes de Mesco, Ferrant Gomes, Garcy Aluarez’s son, and other knights from Galicia who know a lot about this sport, and with other big game hunters who frequent the households of our lord the king and don Juan and with these good men that have been mentioned who know about this sport.”

³⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 78–80.

that is complete. (There were notes.) In any event, the incompleteness of the text in these two ways (the falconry manual and the manual on big game hunting) is a question that remains for now unanswered. (I discuss it again later.)

Juan Manuel is cited in third person at least thirty times, most citations beginning with "Et dice don Juan Manuel" For Dennis Seniff these third person references testify to the orality in the book-making process. In effect, as indicated above, it could be that Juan Manuel was not the one who wrote the book by hand, but rather he dictated the content (or parts of the content) to a scribe. We could even imagine this process taking place in different settings, indoors with the texts that served as sources, and outdoors during hunting expeditions. An additional complication would be the time factor. Did Juan Manuel dictate the material on the spot to the scribe? Or was the material recalled by the scribe and put in writing at a later date? In this respect, the prologue is definitely different from the body of the book. The narrator/scribe is probably more of an author here than he is in the twelve chapters. According to German Orduna, however, most of it was written earlier on in the first stage of its composition.³⁶

I believe, as explained above, that the prologue was written while the book was being put together, and like Orduna, in different stages. Either way, Juan Manuel is mentioned in third person in the past tense, whereas in the book itself he is mentioned for the most part in the present tense. Compare: "ley(o) mucho en ellos et fallo" (in the prologue) with "Et dize don Iohan que yal contesçio a el esto" (chapter IV). In the prologue Juan Manuel is not there by the scribe's side; in the book he is (or seems to be).³⁷

Important information about the narrator/scribe in the prologue can be gathered from the first paragraph. It can be said that he was, like Juan Manuel, also an admirer of Alfonso X. Interesting is what Alphonsine accomplishments he chooses

³⁶ See "Los prólogos a la *Crónica abreviada* y al *Libro de la caza*," *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 9), 119. "El *Libro de la caza*, en la forma en que hoy lo conocemos, procede de esa misma etapa, de la que seguramente conserva la mayor parte del prólogo; pero el texto, aun fragmentario, muestra una elaboración por la que la fuente alfonsí desaparece, hábilmente entretrejida y dispuesta, con artificio tal que hoy resulta muy difícil de discernir." ("The *Libro de la caza*, in the form that it has come down to us, belongs to this first stage of the author's career, and almost certainly the majority of the prologue was also written in this first stage; the text, however, still fragmentary and unfinished, shows a later stage of writing in which the alphonsine source is expertly weaved in and arranged so that it disappears artfully, so much so that now it is very difficult to pinpoint.")

³⁷ As to the possible methods of composition of the *Libro de la caza*, my opinion differs from Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux's (see note 3) only in two important ways. I believe that both methods of composition were used: that Juan Manuel dictated the material to the scribe and that the scribe recalled what Juan Manuel told him on different occasions. I also differ in that I believe that Juan Manuel did have notes written down based on his conversations in the past with family members. Ayerbe-Chaux cites both Dennis Senniff and Vicente Cantarino on this subject.

to focus on. After a general praise—Alfonso X did more than any other king (since Ptolomeo) to foment knowledge and culture in his kingdoms, and he commissioned translations in all the areas of knowledge—he applauds the king for having translated “toda la secta de los moros” (sacred Muslim texts) and the sacred Jewish texts of the *Talmud* and the *Cabala*. The narrator identifies himself as a Christian when he adds that the king had these translations done so that they would prove that the Jewish and the Muslim religions are mistaken and the Christian religion that “los christianos avemos” (“we Christians have”) is the true faith.

This is a connection to the conversion discourse that we find in the *Libro de los estados*, in which Julio convinces the prince that the Christian religion is superior to the Muslim and the Jewish religions. (See especially chapter III in second part). After admiring the king for translating into Romance the secular and ecclesiastical laws, he addresses God directly in a prayer in which he basically summarizes the reason for the existence of humankind: to get to know him, to praise him, and to strive to be like him, by doing good deeds, using goodwill with the faculty of reason. In the last bit of the prayer the word “maravilloso” is repeated twice.

The narrator says that God’s judgments are just and marvelous. The last two sentences of the prayer are hermetic. (To be hermetic once in a while, as we know, is typical of Juan Manuel or his scribe or scribes.) What is secret? Whatever it is, it is “maravilloso”, and it is something concerning Alfonso X that we are not made privy to, of course. We see the word “contra” (“contra este tan noble rey.”) Then the final shutdown: “Tu, Sennor, sabes lo que feziste, bendito seas por quanto feziste et quanto fazes et por quanto faras.”³⁸ (“God you know what you did. Blessed are thou for what you did, what you do and what you will do.”) The two people who know the secret are the narrator and God.

What we have to realize about the scribe is that he never wants to have or at least show any personal interests or opinions. He never wants to show himself as an individual. For example, he never contradicts Juan Manuel. His main interest is representing Juan Manuel. Yet, I venture to say that it is someone’s personal interest that is the secret here. It can either be “his” (the scribe’s) or Juan Manuel’s. Is the scribe a convert who is secretly thanking God for his conversion, and that is why he focuses on the mistaken two faiths, going to the length of mentioning the *Talmud* and *Cabala* of the Jewish faith and identifying himself as Christian?

Is the scribe a Dominican friar attached to the Dominican Monastery of Peñafiel that Juan Manuel is the patron of? As we know, Dominicans dedicated themselves to the conversion enterprise. Is the Dominican thanking God for a marvelous favor? On the other hand, the secret could be the well-known Manueline

³⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 520: 28–30.

maneuver to ally God's will with his political ambitions against the royal lineage. The scribe has no personal interest here, and his identity is completely fused with Juan Manuel's. This would explain the phrase, "contra este tan noble rey." The prologue to *Libro de la caza* could have been written around the time *Libro de las armas* was written, where Juan Manuel's political ambitions are the motivations behind three skilled narratives ("razones") that use religious and heraldic imagery and sophisticated narrative techniques to demonstrate that Alfonso X's lineage is cursed while his own lineage has been chosen by God to inherit the Castilian throne.³⁹

There is no way to know if the scribe himself accompanied Juan Manuel in hunting expeditions nor if he participated in hunting himself nor how much he knew, if anything, about falconry. Certainly his participation in the composition of the book gave him an education on the subject. We can venture to say that he knew Juan Manuel and his family very well. He worked as a scribe in the household. Juan Manuel possibly dictated his letters to him (as well as to others). He belonged to the important profession of "escrivanos" that were employed in the households of the royalty and the nobility (and increasingly for other professionals and social classes).⁴⁰

It is likely that Juan Manuel, because he was continuously concerned with juggling his many responsibilities and pastimes (using his time well and getting things done) did take his scribe with him on his hunting expeditions. They could work together (compose) during breaks and in the evenings. A hint of the profession of the scribe is found in chapter V of the *Libro de la caza* in a very important context that happens to be an essential connecting theme that runs

³⁹ Juan Manuel, or Juan Manuel's faithful scribe, cannot turn off the political agenda, not even in this manual on falconry. I believe that the hermetism in the prologue, which shows just enough animosity toward king Alfonso XI, is proof that the prologue was composed in different stages, possibly in more stages than the two suggested by German Orduna. We should definitely not reject the later stages of composition (when Juan Manuel was at the peak of hostility, even war, with the king, between 1327 and 1330, or when he later was still nursing his resentments for the king's success in alienating him from his court and taking away his administrative position in the kingdom of Murcia) in favor of an earlier one only. An even later stage should not be discarded, as I suggest, right about the time of the composition of the *Libro de las armas*, after 1335. Political is also who he chooses to mention in the book among both falconers and hunters. For example, he mentions his cousin don Juan, because politically they were allies, yet he does not mention don Felipe, Sancho IV's son, with whom he was enemies. On the animosity between Juan Manuel and don Felipe see María de los Llanos Martínez Carrillo, "El obispado de Sigüenza en el *Libro de la caza*: Un itinerario geográfico," *Don Juan Manuel: VII centenario* (see note 32), 187–98; here 189.

⁴⁰ See *Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio* (see note 22), 298. Title XIX in Alfonso X's *Tercera Partida* is dedicated to describing the profession of the scribe: "De los escrivanos, e quantas maneras son dellos, e que pro nasce de su oficio quando lo fizieren lealmente." ("Concerning the scribes and their classification, and the benefits that their profession provides if performed with loyalty.")

throughout the book, the need for the falconer to use his own criteria, in this case, for feeding the falcon: "Et por ende, quantos escriuanos en el mundo son non podrian escriuir quantas cosas son mester, si el falconero non ha entendimiento de suyo para conosçer la manera del falcon et lo quell cunple fazer."⁴¹ "Not all the scribes in the world could write about all the variables concerning this matter; the falconer needs to use his own judgment based on his familiarity with each individual falcon."

This is the only mention of the profession of scribes in the book. The connecting theme is the differentiation between theory and practice. It seems to me that it is this theme that we can see both Juan Manuel and the scribe working out together. It is the theme that unites the prologue with the body of the work, the theme that unites the chapters, and the theme that provides continuity to the content. I believe both Juan Manuel and his scribe are invested in developing this theme. It is not too far fetched to imagine the scribe reading to Juan Manuel out loud from texts, written sources, even notes that Juan Manuel has jotted down on different occasions, discussing the content, deciding what to put in the book they are composing, and Juan Manuel adding, dictating more information based on his own experiences. There are theories on falconry and different practices, including Juan Manuel's. However, repeated continuously is that the reader/falconer needs to use his own judgment in every situation.

In the prologue the narrator emphasizes that both Alfonso X and Juan Manuel combined theory with practice in their writings on hunting. About Alfonso X he writes, "Et puso muy conplida mente la teorica et la practica commo conuiene a esta arte."⁴² ("And he put in the book both the different theories and the different practices that concern this sport.") The narrator adds that his accomplishment is so outstanding and complete, that no one can make corrections or add anything new. Nevertheless, this is exactly what Juan Manuel and his scribe set out to do, write a more contemporary book (on falconry, at least).

The narrator defines what theory is and what practice is: "Et teorica quiere dezir saber omne la rayz et la entençion de la arte conplida mente, et practica quiere dezir saber omne vsar en aquella arte en guisa que traya acabamiento aquello que quiere."⁴³ ("Theory is the complete knowledge of the history (roots) and the goals of the sport; practice means the ability to set goals in the sport and perform them successfully.") Juan Manuel decided that the present generation of hunters needed more theoretical knowledge, like what he read in his uncle's books, so they would make fewer mistakes, and he would be the one to pass it on. The practice component of his own book is his own recollections and experiences in the sport,

⁴¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 539: 36–38.

⁴² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 520: 440–41.

⁴³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 56–59.

which include necessarily the experiences of other hunters from his father's generation and from his own.

Finally, there is the "entendimiento" (judgment) of each "falconero" who needs to know the idiosyncrasies of the falcon(s) he trains better than anyone else: "Et por que los falcones non son todos de vn talante, finca en el entendimiento del falconero que entienda el talante et la manera del falcon qual es, et assi sabra commo deue pensar del."⁴⁴ ("Because not all falcons are the same, it is up too the trainer to get to know the preferences and the idiosyncrasies of the falcon he is training, and that way he will know what to think.") As we can see, there are three generations of falconers and hunters involved: the younger generation, Juan Manuel's generation and his father's generation. (Later I will add two more generations.)

Both Juan Manuel and the scribe are dictating and writing a book for readers, which are identified in the prologue as men who hunt with falcons (or are interested in doing so), and falconers, the men who train (or want to learn to train) the falcons. In the book itself these readers are 1) implied in every instance, 2) addressed indirectly (where it is said that the falconer has to use his own good judgment), and 3) identified directly as readers in chapter XI, "Et dize don Iohan que sepan todos los que este libro leeyeren . . ."⁴⁵ In other words, the book was composed orally and in writing, but the receptors are necessarily readers who will read the book. (Of course, the reader(s) can in turn read the book out loud to literate and illiterate listeners.) This description of readers reading the book indeed persuades us to see Juan Manuel as a reader himself.

The relationship between Juan Manuel and the reader is often established in a very direct way, in many of the places in which Juan Manuel talks about his own personal experiences (in some cases contradicting the theory). I discuss these personal experiences in detail in the third part of this article; what is important here is the relationship I am referring to. The pattern is this: a description of a theory or a practice, followed by one of Juan Manuel's interjections, "Et dize don Iohan que . . .," which is in turn followed either immediately or after an anecdote by the warning that the falconer has to use his own judgment. If the warning follows immediately, the anecdote generally comes behind:

Et el falconero que el falcon sennolare deuel sennolar estando de bestia et traer el sennuelo enderredor, mas non dar voz fasta que el falcon salga de la mano, et desque saliere, mientre veniere por el camino, darle muy grandes voces, et esso mismo desque llegare al sennuelo et en quanto comiere. Pero dize don Iohan que todo esto ha de fincar en el entendimiento del falconero: ca ya vio los falcones que el primer dia fueron

⁴⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 535: 79–81.

⁴⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 566: 54.

al sennuelo sueltos sin cordel ninguno, et otros que los sennolauan çinco o seys dias ante que los osassen soltar.⁴⁶

[The falconer who lures the falcon should do so while riding on his horse and swinging the lure, but he should not call out until the falcon leaves the fist, and as soon as it does, and when it is on its way back, it is time to yell at it, and continue to do so until it returns to the lure and starts to eat. But don Juan says that the falconer should use his own judgment in how to lure the falcon, because he has seen falcons that on the first day returned to the lure without being leashed, and others that had to be trained with the lure for five to six days before they were let loose.]

The most famous passage in which Juan Manuel's voice warns that theoretical knowledge is insufficient is found in chapter VI. The falconer cannot rely on what he can read in the book. First, there are so many occasions when the written instructions don't apply to the problems and the outcomes. Second, what happens if it rains and the book gets wet? If the falconer depends on the book too much, he is in trouble.

Pero dize que todo esto a de fincar en el entendimiento del falconero: ca ya el vio falcones que sin todas estas cosas fueron muy buenos garçeros, et avn que mataron nunca les echando trayna, et otros que faziendo les todas estas cosas, nunca quisieran ser buenos. Et assi por fuerça a de fincar en el entendimiento del falconero. Que commo quiera que todo esta aqui escripto commo se deue fazer, pocas vezes se guisa que se puede fazer assi; et si el falconero non sopiesse nada de suyo, si non lo que esta escripto en el libro, tarde fara buen falcon; ca si quier quando lloviesse o quando se aguassee la garça en el rio, si entonçe oviesse de abrir el libro para leer le, mojar se ya et seria perdido el libro, et dende adelante non sabri(a) commo caçar. Por ende a mester que el falconero aya tal entendimiento que de suyo sepa poner consejo para afeytar su falcon; que si buen entendimiento oviere, avn que algunas cosas mengüen que se non pueden fazer commo aqui esta escripto, a todas sabra dar recabdo et (non) dexara por esso de fazer bueno el falcon que troxiere.⁴⁷

[But he says that for all this the falconer should rely on his own judgment; because he has seen falcons that were good killers of cranes without all this training, and some that even killed without using first a practice prey, and other falcons that with all the training possible never became good hunters. This is why the falconer has to rely on his own judgment. Even though all the instructions on what to do are written in this book, very few times does it happen that following the instructions is sufficient. If the falconer does not know anything on his own and relied only on the book, he might never train a good falcon. If it happened to rain or if the crane splashed in the river, how ridiculous to then at that moment open the book to read, which would most likely get wet and ruined. The falconer would not know how to hunt. It is necessary that the falconer rely on his own good judgment in order to know how to train his falcon, so

⁴⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 540: 86–94.

⁴⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 543–44: 115–31.

when conditions are not ideal or things do not turn out as they are described in the book, he can be successful in training a falcon to be a good hunter.]

This combination of theory or general practice, interjection by Juan Manuel, anecdote and warning, is repeated in chapters IV to X (but not in chapters I–III and X–XI), in some chapters twice or more, and each time in an original and different way.⁴⁸

At certain points in the composition of the book the scribe quotes Juan Manuel's decisions on what to put in the book and what to leave out, most of which is based on Juan Manuel's tastes, preferences, experiences and knowledge. For example because falcons are superior to "azores" (goshawks or sparrowhawks), according to Juan Manuel, falcons will be discussed first. He will discuss the "azores" when he finishes discussing the falcons, which he never does. The first part of the book is dedicated to describing the five types of falcons there are, and they too are discussed in order of their superiority (their nobility).

When it is time to discuss the fifth type, the "bornis" (the Western Marsh Harrier), the narrator tells us that Juan Manuel did not want to talk about this type, because he does not like hunting with them: "De los bornis non quiso don Iohan fablar mucho por que se non paga mucho de la su caça nin de las sus maneras."⁴⁹ Note that here Juan Manuel was talking/ dictating ("fablar"), though not talking about "bornis." At the end of the following chapter (IV), the narrator again explains that Juan Manuel says that he does not want to talk about anything concerning the Western Marsh Harrier.

However, if his instructions in training the Gammal Hane were followed for the Western Marsh Harrier, their value would rise. Discussing the methods of taming and training the falcons, the narrator states that the Cherrug falcon that is imported in boats will not be discussed "en este libro" ("in this book"), because these birds of prey are too tame by the time they arrive.⁵⁰ Chapter XI is dedicated to the illnesses of falcons and their cures. Juan Manuel explains (through the narrator) that it is impossible that he and other falconers know completely all the theory involved, so, except for the theory that is applicable, he left it out of the book. He focused instead on what he and other falconers of his time know and practice. In this passage we find the combination of speaking ("fablar") and writing ("escruiir"):

⁴⁸ The passages that warn the falconer to use his judgment are the following: chapter IV (535: 79–81, 536: 96–98), chapter V (538:33–39, 540: 90–94), chapter VI (543: 115–31, 546: 201–12), chapter VII (549: 94–109), chapter VIII (551: 50–57, 553:105–18, 555: 183–88, 556: 215–24), chapter IX (562: 69–72), and in chapter X (564–66: 43–54).

⁴⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 532: 153–54.

⁵⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 535: 82–87.

Et estas cosas todas pertenesçen a la teorica et muchas mas de quantas aqui se dizen. Et porque la teorica del arte de la çaça es muy graue de se saber verdadera mente, dize don Iohan que non se atreuio el a fablar en ella ninguna cosa, saluo ende quanto tanne, a lo que allega la teorica, a lo que se agora vsa en las enfermedades de los falcones. Et por que el nin los otros falcone[ro]s non saben esta teorica verdadera mente, non pueden vsar della. Et pues que el nin ellos non la saben, non quiso don Iohan fablar della en este libro, mas quiso escriuir aquello que agora vsan el et los otros en las enfermedades que a en los cuerpos, et otrosi en las menguas que an por que, avn que sean sanos, non pueden çaçar commo deuen.⁵¹

[And these things belong to the category of theory and many more things that are not mentioned here. And because theory pertaining to the sport of hunting is very difficult to know well, don Juan says that he did not dare talk anything about it, but only when it was applicable to today's practices regarding the diseases of the falcons. And because not even the falconers know this theory well, they can't apply it. And since not even they know the theory, don Juan did not want to talk about it in this book, but chose rather to write about how he and others handle the diseases that the falcons suffer in their bodies, and also about other conditions that prevent otherwise healthy falcons from reaching their potential in hunting.]

This passage marks a clear division between the previous chapters and this chapter on illnesses. We are told that theory (other sources) in part was used in the previous chapters (with the exception perhaps of chapter VI), whereas the material in chapter XI is based primarily on Juan Manuel's own personal experience.⁵² The same is true for the next chapter, the final one of the incomplete manuscript, which names and describes the places that are good for hunting. It is clarified that these are places that Juan Manuel has explored and hunted in. As a wealthy landowner, Juan Manuel often hunted on his own lands. The last part of the book indeed sounds like a travel guide; Juan Manuel states that these names of places, descriptions and directions could be useful to him in the future, since he could easily forget them, and useful to other hunters now and in the future:

⁵¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 567: 64–76.

⁵² It is truly difficult to distinguish, as I have said, what is theory and what is experience. The more times I read the book the more I see that there is more experience (oral sources) than theory (written sources). Not only do we have Juan Manuel's voice coming into the narrative frequently, this voice does not seem or feel very different often times from the surrounding narrative. In addition, that throughout the text the narrator often uses the word "agora" to describe present practices, tastes and preferences in the art of falconry points, in my opinion, to new material not old. Maybe the sources were used as guides in order to know what subject matter to cover, and the subject matter was actualized with the input of the team, the scribe, Juan Manuel and possibly a professional falconer or two. In any event, Juan Manuel's voice states here that this is new material, based more on experience than the previous material. Chapters VI and VIII, however, seem as oral and personal as chapters X and XI. Indeed, the same can be said, as I stated, for most of the material.

Pues en el capitulo ante deste dize lo que agora vsan fazer a las enfermedades que los falcones ha[n], dira en este que caças ha et que lugares para la caçar en las tierras que don Iohan a andado. Et esto fizo don Iohan por que quando el acaesçiese en algunas de las tierras que en este libro son escriptas et se non acordare de los nonbres de las riberas o de los pasos o de los lugares, que los pueda saber leyendo en este libro, por que pueda fallar la caça mas çierta et mas sin trabajo et la pueda caçar mas a su voluntad; et esto mesmo podran fazer todos los que este libro touieren et leyeren tan bien en su vida de don Iohan commo despues.⁵³

[Since the previous chapter discussed what treatments are used nowadays for the diseases and ailments that falcons can suffer, this chapter will describe the places for hunting that don Juan himself has hunted in. And don Juan did this so that he could use the book himself. If he found himself in any of these lands and could not remember the names of the riverbanks or the spots or places, he could recall them by reading this book. This way he could be more relaxed and focus his attention on hunting without this difficulty; and this is how this book could be used by all others who have and read this book during don Juan's lifetime and after.]

In this chapter Juan Manuel, writes the narrator, says that he did not want to include in the book the subject of hunting rabbits and pigeons, because it is not as noble as hunting birds:

Otrosi dize don Iohan que por que la caca de las perdizes et de las liebres non es caça tan noble nin tan apuesta commo la de la ribera, que non quiso fazer en este libro mençion de los lugares do ha estas caças.⁵⁴

[In addition, don Juan Manuel says that because the hunt of pigeons and hares is not as noble or attractive as the hunt of birds that live on or around water, he did not want to mention in this book the places for this type of hunting.]

For the most part, Juan Manuel's geographical knowledge is remarkable; it is detailed and vivid. On the other hand, on a few occasions he shows no reluctance to admit to not having hunted in some places or to admit to not remembering names: "El arroyo de (. . .), del dize don Iohan que nunca andido a caça en el et que por esto non sabe que caças y ha o que lugar para las caçar."⁵⁵ ("About the stream of . . ., don Juan says that he has never hunted there and for that reason he does not know what is there to hunt there or where exactly to go.") Close to the end of the chapter the narrator writes, "Et dize don Iohan que non se acuerda de los no[n]bres de los lugares do nasçen, mas la vna es un ar[r]oyo que passa por Balbazil et es muy buen ar[r]oyo de caça."⁵⁶ ("And don Juan says that he does not

⁵³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 577–78: 1–12.

⁵⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 581–82: 137–40.

⁵⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 582–83: 168–70.

⁵⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 596: 596–98.

remember the names of the places where the points of origin of the streams are located, but one of them is a stream that passes through Balbazil, and it is a very good stream for hunting.”) He also relies on hearsay:

“Et [en] tierra de Molina, si non es el rio que pasa por Molina, dize don Iohan que non sabe el y buena ribera ninguna, commo quier quell dixieron que contra el canpo que auia buenas riberas”⁵⁷

[“And Juan Manuel says that except for the river that passes through Molina, he does not know of any good streams in the territory of Molina, even though he has been told that there are good streams in the country”]

Back to the subject of divisions made in the book, I would like to recall the ones we have identified. The first division we identified was the book on falconry and the book on hunting big game, the latter of which we don’t know that it was ever written. The second division is the material on falcons and the material on “azores.” The material on “azores” is also absent. The third division is chapter XII itself. It is incomplete. The geographical descriptions are said to include, beside the bishoprics of Cartagena, Cuenca and Ciguença, which are indeed included, also the bishoprics of Osma, Palencia, Burgos, Calahorra, León, Astorga, Zamora, Salamanca, Avila, Segovia, Toledo, Jaen, Cordoba and Sevilla, which are not included, either because the material is lost or because it was never developed.

The fourth division is the one I identified between the material in the first ten chapters, in which there is more theory (sources), and the material in the last two chapters, based entirely on personal experience, if we are to believe the narrator. The chapters themselves are divisions that are discussed and arranged between the scribe and Juan Manuel in the process of composition. Chapter I describes the types of falcons. Chapter II proves the superiority of the falcons over the “azores.” Chapter III describes the physical characteristics of the different types of falcons. Chapter IV discusses the methods of taming and training falcons. Chapter V explains how to train the falcon to return to his post after flight. Chapter VI focuses on training the falcon to like the hunt by pitting him against herons. Chapter VII discusses how the merlin can be trained to hunt cranes. Chapter VIII gives instructions on the general care of falcons. Chapter IX describes the conditions that are needed to support the young falcon’s transition into adulthood when he acquires new plumage, which subsequently happens every year. Chapter X gives instructions on how the falcons should be taken off fasting. As mentioned above, chapter XI describes ailments, injuries and diseases that can befall falcons and their cures, and chapter XII gives an account of places that Juan Manuel knows are good places to hunt.

⁵⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 596: 605–08.

Another division takes place in chapter XI. It is extremely important for our discussion on the method of composition of the book. The narrator/ scribe states that after Juan Manuel made the book, he discovered another way to make the falcons vomit if they are sick to their stomach. This statement indicates another later moment in the composition of the book. It was finished, and the scribe and Juan Manuel added more material to the chapter because of the new discovery: "Et despues que don Iohan fizo este libro, fallo otra manera para fazer a los falcones purgar de los vondejos."⁵⁸ ("And after don Juan made this book, he discovered another way to make the falcons vomit so as to clean their stomach.")

The statement indicates that the book was finished. This could lead us to believe that chapter XII was longer and did include the bishoprics named at the beginning of the chapter. In any event, the statement supports Orduna's opinion of different stages of composition. What we do not know is how much time elapsed between "finishing the book" and returning to it to add more material. In addition, we do not know what "finishing" the book means, what material it entails, how long it took, nor how many stages were involved.

There is another division in the book that is more subtle but equally important for our understanding both of the authorship and the readership. The focus on hunting as a noble sport, introduced as such in the prologue and in chapter I, gets quickly dropped in favor of giving instructions on the care of falcons. It is only until the end of chapter XI that the sport is again framed explicitly again as an aristocratic pastime. Indeed, the implied readers throughout the book are the falconers that care for and train the falcons. (As explained above, the falconers are also addressed directly as readers.) The focus changes at the end of chapter XI. The protagonist is the aristocratic hunter with falcons, not only the falconer anymore. He is the "grant sennor" who now has trained and well cared for falcons to hunt with. He is the leader of the hunting party who is familiar with or needs to be familiar with the places that are good for hunting that are described in chapter XII. I will show this subtle but important transition with more detail.

The falconer's function is summarized at the end of chapter XI:

... et que aya muy buenos falconeros que sepan muy bien afeytar los falcones et caçar muy bien con ellos et guaresçer de las enfermedades que ovieren; et fazer les todas las cosas asi commo ovieren meester."⁵⁹

[... and it is necessary to have very good falconers who know to train the falcons, hunt with them with expertise, and cure their diseases; all these things as described are necessary.]

⁵⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 574: 305–06.

⁵⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 576–77: 383–86.

Now the focus is put on the “sennor”, whose obligation is to give the falconer credit and compensation for his arduous work:

Et que faga el sennor tanto bien a los falconeros por que ellos ayan talante de lazdrar con los falcones por les fazer tan buenos que el sennor tome muy grant plazer con ellos en veyendo los et caçando con ellos; et con el bien fecho que el sennor les fiziere, sufran et oluiden el muy grant lazerio et trabajo que lieuan en amansar los falcones et en afeytar los et en caçar con ellos.⁶⁰

[And the nobleman needs to compensate the falconers well so that they be willing to work with the falcons to make them excellent so that the nobleman can take pleasure seeing them and hunting with them; and with the nobleman’s generosity the falconers will forget the labor and hardship they go through in taming and training the falcons and in hunting with them.]

In the next paragraph Juan Manuel’s voice enumerates the birds of prey that the “sennor,” the aristocrat, should take with him on his hunting expeditions. He should have with him at least seventeen birds: two gyrfalcons, or one gyrfalcon and one chargh (or charghela if male), both of which should be good heron hunters, four peregrine falcons, six merlin falcons, three different types of goshawks (each with a different hunting function), one western marsh harrier to kill rabbits, and one sparrowhawk. Juan Manuel draws a clear picture of what it takes to hunt like a nobleman, a “grant sennor.” Otherwise, we are talking about a common man, not a nobleman, he says: “Et si non lo fazen, caçarian com[mo] otro omne, mas non commo pertenesçe caçar al grant sennor.”⁶¹ He adds that it would be embarrassing for the nobleman to encounter prey to hunt and not have the adequate equipment (the birds of prey) to do so: “Et avn dize don Iohan que tiene que es mengua al grant sennor, pues quiere ser caçador, si falla ninguna caça por la tierra que passare et non trae recabdo para la tomar.”⁶²

The important qualifier for the “grant sennor” is “pues quiere ser cazador.” The reader is, beside the falconer, the nobleman who hunts or wants to hunt. The following chapter, as we have said, provides valuable geographical information for the nobleman hunter who uses falcons. The reader is, on the one hand, Juan Manuel himself, the “grant sennor.” As he states in chapter XII, he can read this information when he can’t rely on his memory. All the information that has been written down, in fact, could serve this purpose, to keep the information and knowledge accessible and to aid his memory. The other hunters/ readers were also identified in the prologue as the “caçadores qua agora son” who could be better

⁶⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 577: 386-92.

⁶¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 577: 409-11.

⁶² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 577: 411-14.

hunters with more theoretical knowledge and more good practical advice from experienced hunters like the author and the great hunters he has known.

I believe that a problem that the book presents is the dual dimension of Juan Manuel as falconer who takes care of falcons and as aristocratic hunter. A good part of the book as it came down to us is dedicated to the care and training of falcons. As we mentioned earlier, it was rare that a nobleman trained and cared for his own falcons. Was Juan Manuel as involved as this book leads us to believe? Chapter XI is especially interesting in this respect, containing the medicinal knowledge for diagnosing and curing ailments and diseases. As I noted above, Juan Manuel clarifies that there is too much theory on this subject, and that he has chosen to talk only about what he and other contemporary falconers know and practice. Notice that he calls himself a falconer: "et por que el nin los otros falcone[ro]s."⁶³ In the prologue he identifies himself as a hunter primarily: "el et los otros caçadores."⁶⁴

Was the team that composed the book Juan Manuel and his scribe, or could it have also included another falconer, a person in his own household dedicated to the care of the falcons and to arranging, preparing and participating in the hunting excursions. Could this falconer be Sancho Martines, who is identified in chapter III? What is important about Sancho Martines in this moment of the narrative is that he interjects in the present tense just like Juan Manuel does. That is, Sancho Martines is not introduced by Juan Manuel's voice but by the narrator's/scribe's: "Pero dize Sancho Martines, que es de los mejores falcone[r]los que don Iohan nunca vio et que mas sepa desta arte et que mejores falcones faze . . ."⁶⁵ ("But Sancho Martines, who is among the best falconers don Iohan has ever met and who knows the most about this sport and who trains the best falcons, says . . .")

As already stated, stories that other hunters in his family environment told him are part of the narrative. Some of these include falconers' input, "et a falconeros que fueron del rey don Alfonso et del infante don Manuel."⁶⁶ (" . . . and falconers who worked for the king don Alfonso and the prince don Manuel.")

As to the hunters who passed on knowledge to Juan Manuel, it is intriguing to observe is how much Juan Manuel's cousin, Don Juan (Alfonso X's son, who died in the battle of Vega in 1319), could have contributed in spirit, beside the content that is explicitly ascribed to him. Juan Manuel states in chapter VIII that Don Juan was the best hunter he ever knew: "que fue el mejor caçador que el nunca vio."⁶⁷ In the third part of this article I focus on what Fradejas Rueda calls the anecdotal

⁶³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 567:70.

⁶⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 60.

⁶⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 529: 31-33.

⁶⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 65-66.

⁶⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 154:138.

component of the treatises on falconry, for which Juan Manuel's book is always thought of as the most lively and interesting in this respect.

Part Three. "Et dize don Iohan que yal contesçio a el esto": "And Juan Manuel says this happened to him"

The places in the narrative in which Juan Manuel's voice comes in can be divided into four categories that often overlap: 1) those that express primarily an opinion or a preference; 2) those that are prefaced or followed by a warning to the falconer to use his own judgment for the reason that there are exceptions to the rules (here Juan Manuel might describe exceptions that he himself has witnessed); 3) specific past memories (these might be short or long, and they are often attached to the second category); and 4) memories that involve memories and experiences of other family members and falconers.

The instances in the narrative of the first kind are quite simple. They are interesting because they give us information about Juan Manuel's thinking and feeling about falconry. They attest to bonding with the sport and with the falcons. They might include a reference to an experience. I will discuss this category first. The second category is the theme of the book that unites all the chapters and the material, as we explained in the second part of this article.

The third and fourth categories are more complex, because they involve more history. Though the narrative in *Libro de la caza* is not organized according to a chronology of events, but according to subject matter, Juan Manuel's voice talking about his personal experiences (and not just his opinion), introduced by the third person "Et dize don Iohan," is of time and memory. We can experience Juan Manuel remembering and reliving past experiences, recent and more remote in time, as he dictated to his scribe. The remembering and reliving reinforced the bonding experience for Juan Manuel between himself and other male hunters (dead and alive) in the family and in the circle of accompanying friends, hired professionals and servants.

The bonding that is recreated in the book is between falconers, on the one hand, as we have explained, who are not necessarily of the noble class, and hunters in the royal family and in the royal retinue, and between the two groups. Other recreated bonding occurs between the men and favorite or memorable falcons, and between the men and the topography that is described.

An example of the first category is found in chapter III where Juan Manuel's voice states that it is not warranted that the Peregrine falcon is valued more than the Gammal hane ("bahari"). There are three main differences between the two birds: 1) the Peregrine falcon is white and the Gammal hane's color is between red and yellow; the Peregrine falcon is caught in the wild, and the Gammal hane is

first caught in the nest; and 3) the Peregrine falcon is larger in size. Juan Manuel's oral defense of the Gammal hane was longer than what he and the scribe decided to include in the book: "Et para prouar esto pornia el muchas razones, si non que non tanne mas a la teorica esta arte que non a la practica."⁶⁸ ("And to demonstrate this he gave many reasons, but because this art involves more theory than practice, he did not continue.")

He ends his defense defending himself for wanting to defend this falcon; he wanted to honor it because it is natural to the region, "sus naturales." Juan Manuel is indeed often partial to what is local and homegrown. On the other hand, he does not want to talk about the Western Marsh Harrier, which he does not like, as we mentioned above.⁶⁹ In chapter IV Juan Manuel's voice continues his defense of the Gammal hane, focusing now on the correct way to raise these falcons. Though this correct way is first described without interference from Juan Manuel's voice, his influence nevertheless is felt with the clarification "en esta tierra", "in this land." His input follows with his voice stating that he himself has raised the Gammal hane in the manner just described: "Et dize don Iohan que en esta guisa los crio muchas vezes."⁷⁰ This chapter ends with Juan Manuel's refusal again to talk about the Western Marsh Harrier. Nevertheless, he states that even the Western Marsh Harrier, if raised in the manner described in this chapter, would be a better falcon than all the other superior falcons that are raised incorrectly.

In chapter IX Juan Manuel expresses his opinion about bathing and feeding the falcon during the moulting of its feathers. He believes that it's safe for the falcon to bathe during this stage. For food, he recommends cow, rabbit or chicken. In chapter XI Juan Manuel gives his opinion with regard to the best medicine for the disease "aguas", either "habarraz" (Lice-Bane or Stavesacre) or "ramos de ruda"

⁶⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 532: 149-51.

⁶⁹ In this chapter Juan Manuel's talks about another preference he has. He and Sancho Martines prefer that the Peregrine falcon have short, fat and thick toes. He also concurs with general taste, and prefers that the Peregrine falcon be very large, have a round and large head, big eyes, a big beak, a big mouth, a big jaw, a long neck, etc. *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 528-59: 27-38.

⁷⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 536: 121.

(twigs of the rue plant).⁷¹ The former is better, because the twigs of the rue plant harm the falcon:

Pero esta melezina faz muy grand danno a los falcones e les faze enegresçer la color de las manos et de la çera del pico, [et] esto es sennal que les quema la sangre et les corrompe los vmores.⁷²

[This medicine harms falcons very much; it blackens the beak and the claws, which is sign that the blood is burning and the humors are being corrupted.]⁷³

For the treatment of “güermezes” (trichomoniasis, another parasitic infection), Juan Manuel recommends to apply the poop of a baby human who is nursing:

Otrosi dize que la mejor et mas çierta melezina que falla para esto es tomar el estiercol del moço chico que mama et deuen lo poner en vna cuchar de fierro et poner lo en el forno o sobre el fuego et desque fuere seco en gusia que lo pueden fazer poluos, deuen le echar en la llaga dellos.⁷⁴

[In addition, he says that the best and most effective medicine for this condition is the excrement of a human baby who is nursing. It needs to be prepared first by putting it on a steel spoon, then in the oven or on top of a fire, till it dries and can be made into a powder which can then be applied to the wound.]

One of the most interesting passages where Juan Manuel offers his personal opinion is found in chapter VIII. His voice interjects to refer to the varying opinions among falconers as to the best way for a falcon to hunt its prey (heron). He gives four different opinions. The fourth is his late cousin's don Juan (he agrees with this one), which he describes in detail. This passage has an emotional intensity (I refer to it again when I discuss the fourth category of interjections)

⁷¹ According to Juan Manuel the symptoms of this disease are heavy eyelids, sad looking eyes. The nasal passages can excrete mucous: “Et las sennales para conosçer estas enfermedades son que quando an agua, tienen los ojos mas çerrados de lo que deuen et mas tristes, et a las vezes corre les agua por las ventanas” (*Obras completas* I, 567: 811–84). “And the symptoms of this disease are heavy eyelids that make the eyes look sad and sometimes excretion of mucous from the nasal passages.” This might be a condition described in the appendix “Diseases of and Accidents to Hawks, and their Treatment” of *The Art of Falconry* (see note 17), here 428: “Another more formidable parasitic insect is a species of acarus that burrows into the mucous membrane of the nasal passages and attacks also the eyelids. Increasing rapidly in numbers, they may invade the whole body.”

⁷² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 568: 92–95.

⁷³ Juan Manuel shows an avid interest in medicine. His knowledge (if it is his) is not confined to the places where his voice interjects. The entire narrative revolves around these interjections. For example, in this passage Juan Manuel's voice proceeds to explain how the recommended medicine (“habarraz”) should be applied. His instructions, as those throughout the chapter, are detailed, descriptive and thorough.

⁷⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 569: 141–45.

because of Juan Manuel's admiration for his cousin as a hunter. Indeed the passage creates two camps of "falconeros", Juan Manuel and his cousin don Juan, and other falconeros, who compared to don Juan, are not as knowledgeable and experienced. Don Juan was indeed Juan Manuel's most loved teacher in matters of hunting, as we shall see.

Examples of the second category of interjections are found in all the chapters, but I will only focus on chapters V, VI and VII, enough in order to see the variety in the number of occurrences within the chapter, and in the content and length of the utterances.

Juan Manuel's voice appears only once in chapter V, at the end. He makes two statements: 1) the falconer has to pay attention to each falcon during training with the creance; 2) he has seen some falcons that without the use of a leash flew and returned to the creance on the first day, and other falcons that needed to remain leashed while taking up to five to six days to train to return to the creance.

In chapter VI Juan Manuel's voice comes in the narrative four times. However, we can never be certain, especially in this chapter where Juan Manuel seems very involved, if Juan Manuel is not speaking/dictating throughout. As we mentioned in the first part of this article, the problem is not knowing when Juan Manuel's voice stops. Juan Manuel's voice here, where it is indicated, first comments that it is a bad sign when the falcon does not want to attack a heron that has been placed in front of it during the training process. Later he enumerates six conditions that need to be in place for the falcon to be a good hunter of herons. There are exceptions, he warns. He himself has seen falcons that are good heron hunters without having all these conditions in place aiding them, and, on the other hand, he has seen falcons that, having all the advantages described, had disappointing results. He adds somewhat later that it is a bad sign if the falcon does not want to separate from the falconer. Juan Manuel's voice rounds out the chapter repeating the above using different phrases and examples. The last paragraph looks like this: Don Juan Manuel's voice interjects ("Et dize don Iohan...") to make these statements:

The falconer needs to use his own judgment.

He has seen many falcons that were good hunters and were not trained under all these complicated conditions and he has seen bad falcons that were hard to train despite the best training.

The falconer needs to be a good one and pay attention to everything.

It is impossible to put in writing all the variables pertaining to falcons.

Some falcons ascend well but descend badly. Other falcons do both poorly. Others take off too soon and do not want to return and others fly well but do not want to return to the creance. Others do everything poorly and others do everything well.

For all these reasons the falconer needs to rely on his own judgment.

In chapter VII Juan Manuel's voice weaves into the narrative in two places, at the end of the first paragraph and at the end of the chapter. The first passage is short and the second is longer. The subject is training the Gammal hane to hunt crane. Juan Manuel explains that the falconer needs to use his own judgment, because he himself has seen exceptions to the rule, falcons who without going through all the steps in training were daring enough to kill the crane, other falcons who instead kill heron, others who kill crane mistaking the prey for heron, and others who just don't meet any expectations. The last paragraph has all the components that the last paragraph in chapter VI has, only with different content. I will separate the statements for comparison. Juan Manuel's voice interjects ("Et dize don Iohan...") and makes these statements:

Everything depends on the falconer's own experience hunting.

Though the procedures that should be followed are written in this book, there are many times when they do not apply.

Many times men do not find the prey when and how they want to, or they find it when the falcons have not been made ready. By chance, when the falcons are ready, they don't find the prey. If the falcons are made ready every day, it is dangerous for they can die of hunger waiting for prey. Then it is necessary to feed them, which means again that they are not ready for the hunt if it is found. There are other variables: bad weather, impatience and bad timing, mistakes that the falcons make or the hunters, or many other possible mishaps.

For these reasons it is not enough to rely only on what is written in this book. The falconer needs to rely on his own judgment concerning how best to get the falcon ready to hunt.

As we can see, the theme of the book, Juan Manuel's insistence that the falconer/reader not rely entirely on the book and that he use his own judgment, is repeated in every chapter, and in many chapters twice or three times. This definitely lends a repetitive quality to the content, yet at the same time every repetition of the theme is original and unique.

Juan Manuel also remembers specific experiences (third category). In chapter IV, he explains that it is dangerous to feed falcons that are not tame yet "plumada", which can be a mixture of all kinds of foods, like teeth, bones, insects, hair, beaks, and vegetables, because they can choke while eating if they catch sight of a human being, which makes them angry. Juan Manuel then states that this has happened to him before: "Et dize don Iohan que yal contesçio a el esto."⁷⁵

In chapter VIII Juan Manuel brags about his hunting skills with as much modesty as he can, aware that he might be criticized for being a bragger. He states

⁷⁵ *Obras completas I* (see note 1), 534: 51–52.

that many times he has trained a falcon to kill a crane very high up in the sky without the aid of another falcon or a dog. He even trained one particular Gammal hane named Picardit (which he later gave as gift to king Fernando IV) to kill crane on his own. In chapter IX Juan Manuel remembers seeing 15 to 20 Gammal hanes all in one space (during the moulting of their feathers) being cared for by one man, and even though they were loose they were trained to come to their meal one by one after the falcon leaders (563: 90–94).

In chapter XI there are six specific personal experiences that the author interjects into the narrative. Though all equally important and interesting, for they attest most probably to the author's interest and knowledge in medicine for falcons' diseases, the one that stands out is his discovery of the ointment, described above, made of the excrement of a nursing baby. For teaching him about this ointment he gives credit to a falconer by the name of "Johannette" who he hunted with in the past and who was employed by his cousin don Juan: "Et dize que esta melezina le mostro Johannete, vn su falconero que andaua con el, que solia beuir con el infante don Iohan."⁷⁶ ("And he says that it was Johannete, a falconer who he hunted with and who was employed by his cousin don Juan, who taught him about this medicine.")

In the chapter this special ointment becomes Juan Manuel's miraculous white ointment, which he recommends for other ailments, for example wounds from violent encounters with cranes or herons. If the falconer can't avail himself of this ointment, there are other medicines that can be applied, for example, hot wine with salt or powder made from dragon's blood and incense, but only if Juan Manuel's ointment can't be obtained.⁷⁷ Juan Manuel backs up his recommendation

⁷⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 570: 152–54.

⁷⁷ "Otrosi quando an alguna ferida de garça o de grua, deuen le melezinar en esta manera: si fuere la ferida de garça por los pechos, en guisa que reçele omne entrar adentro en el cuerpo, non le deuen echar ningunos poluos con que se çierre la llaga, mas deuen le mesar las pennolas derredor de la llaga et poner le del vngüento blanco que faze don Iohan, et luego sera sano et guarido. Et avn dize don Iohan que ya vio el falcon que avia el ala quebrada en el somizo et que guaresçio con este ungüento et cobro su buelo tan bien commo ante quell quebrasse el ala. Et si fuere la ferida de garça por las piernas o por las alas, que passe de la vna parte a la otra o que non passe, para la ferida que fuere en tal lugar, deuen gela salmorar con vino caliente et con sal, et non ha mester otra melezina. Et si fuere ferido de grua, por que la ferida de la grua rasga et non entra muy fonda, deuen gela salmorar commo dicho es, et despues coser la ferida, si fuere tamanna que lo aya mester, et echar le ençma de la llaga poluos de sangre de dragon et ençienço et almazaque tanto del vno commo del otro. Esto lo deuen fazer, si non pudieren aver del vngüento de don Iohan; mas si de aquel pudieren auer, para qual quier manera que la ferida o quebradura sea, sol que non sea salidura, dize don Iohan que non ha mester otra maestria, ca sin dubda con aquell vngüento luego sera guarida. Et si fuere la ferida de humidat de otro falcon o de otra ave, deuen gela salmorar commo dicho es" (*Obras completas* I [see note 1], 575–576: 346–69). ("And also if the falcon has a wound caused by a heron or a crane, it should be treated in this manner: if the wound is from a heron and is around the chest, which would make surgery dangerous, it's best not to

(he is making propaganda of his ointment) with his own almost miraculous results with the ointment when he has used it:

Et avn dize don Iohan que ya vio el falcon que avia el ala quebrada en el somizo et que guarescio con este ünguento et cobro su buelo tan bien commo ante quell quebrasse el ala.⁷⁸

[And don Juan says that he already saw a falcon that had his wing broken at the torso cured with this ointment so that it was able to fly again as well as it did before it broke its wing.]

Even before the ointment is mentioned, the narrator and Juan Manuel are preparing to praise its power by remembering a falcon that belonged to the author that was very sick with trichomoniasis: “Et dize don Iohan que yal contesçio que vn su girifalte avia tantos güermezes que por muchos quell sacaban sienpre tenia las llagas llenas.”⁷⁹ (“And don Juan says that it happened to him that he had a Gyrfalcon that had so many parasites (trichomoniasis) that no matter how many were extracted the wound remained infected.”) Juan Manuel decided to apply a risky treatment: “Et don Iohan aventurolo et quemol las llagas con fuego et lleço el falcon a peligro de muerte, ca por razon del fuego que tenie en la voca non podie comer.”⁸⁰ (“And don Juan took the risk and burnt the wounds with fire, putting the falcon at risk of dying, because it could not eat with a burnt mouth.”) The gyrfalcon survived, and Juan Manuel adds here that the best medicine for curing burnt wings is the medicine that he then describes for the first time. Juan Manuel praises the ointment by stating that he never saw a falcon that did not get cured of trichomoniasis with the application of this ointment (barring the spread of the infection to the ears):

apply powder to try to close the wound, but instead massage the feathers around the wound and put on the wound the white ointment that don Juan makes, and this method will cure and save the falcon. And don Juan says that he already saw a falcon that had his wing broken at the torso cured with this ointment so that it was able to fly again as well as it did before it broke its wing. And if the wound from a heron is on the legs or on the wings, whether or not its length reaches the other side, it should be treated with a mixture of hot wine and salt, and there is no need for any other medicine. If the wound is from a crane, which is typically not as deep and more like a scratch, it should be treated with the hot wine and the salt also; if the wound is big it should be stitched up, and then treated with a powder made from equal amounts of dragon’s blood and incense made from resin of the mastik tree. This should be done only if don Juan’s ointment cannot be obtained; if it is available, this ointment, without need of further medication or treatment, will cure without fail any wounds or fractures, no matter what kind, as long as they are not beyond saving. And if the falcon’s wound was caused by another falcon or another type of bird, the wound should also be treated with the same ointment.”)

⁷⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 575–76: 352–54.

⁷⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 569: 135–37.

⁸⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 569: 137–39.

Et con esta melezina nunca vio falcon a que los echassen que non guaresçiesse, saluo si los güermezes eran llegados a las orejas: ca desque y llegan, pocos o ningunos son los que ende escapan.⁸¹

[And he never saw a falcon that had parasites (trichomoniasis) that was not cured with the application of this medicine, with the exception of when the parasites spread to the ears, in which case there was almost certainly no cure.]

In chapter XII, dedicated to describing the good and bad places to hunt with falcons, Juan Manuel's voice also makes references to personal experiences to back up the general assertions. There is the example of Villena in Murcia, which was Juan Manuel's property, which he inherited from his father.⁸² Both the narrator and Juan Manuel coincide in these statements concerning Villena: "En Villena ay mejor lugar de todas las caças que en todo el regno de Murçia, et avn dize don Iohan que pocos lugares vio el nunca tan bueno[s] de todas la caças . . ." ⁸³ ("Villena is the best place in the kingdom of Murcia for hunting, and don Juan even says that he has seen very few places as good as Villena for hunting. . ."). Following is Juan Manuel's description of hunting action that a man can see from the top of the alcazar of Villena:

. . . ca de çima del alcaçar vera omne caçar garças et anades et gruas con falcones et con açores et perdizes et codornizes, et a otras aues [que] llaman flamenques, que son hermosas aues et muy ligeras para caçar, si non por que son muy graues de sacar del agua, ca nunca estan sinon en muy grant laguna de agua salada; et liebres et conejos Otrosi del alcaçar mismo veran correr montes de jaualis et de çieruos et de cabras montesas.⁸⁴

[. . . from the top of the alcazar a man will see falcons and goshawks hunting cranes, mallards (wild ducks), herons, partridges, quails and other birds called flamingos, that are very beautiful birds and very easy to hunt, except that it is very hard to get them out of the water, because they stay put in big lagoons of salt water; and hares and rabbits.

In addition, from the same alcazar one can see running freely around the hills wild boars, deer and mountain goats.]

This description gets more personal when Juan Manuel states immediately that he himself has gone hunting so close to the alcazar that he could see it, meaning that

⁸¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 569: 145–48.

⁸² See Francisco Díez de Revenga's and Angel Luis Molina Molina's article "Don Juan Manuel y el reino de Murcia: notas al *Libro de la caza*" for a summary of Juan Manuel's affiliations (historical and political) with the kingdom of Murcia and for an explanation of how Murcia is described in the *Libro de la caza*. First published in *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana* I (1973): 9–47; reprinted in *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 39–48.

⁸³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 579: 37–39.

⁸⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 579: 40–47.

there is no need to go far from the alcazar to enjoy hunting of every variety, with one caveat, there are spots that are dangerous:

Et dize don Iohan que todas estas caças fizo el yendo a ojo del alcaçar, et dize que tan açerca mataua los jaulis, que del alcaçar podian muy bien conosçer por cara el que ante llegaua a el. Et dize que si non por que ay muchas aguilas et que a lugares en la huerta [do] ay muy malos pasos, que el diria que era el mejor lugar de caça que el nunca biera.⁸⁵

[And don Juan says that he has hunted all these prey with the alcazar in sight, and he says that he has killed wild boar so close to the alcazar that anybody looking on from the alcazar could recognize everybody's faces way before returning. He also says that if it were not for the all the eagles all over and for the dangerous spots in the area, he would say that this is the best place to hunt that he has ever seen.]

Another memory of a personal experience in Murcia occurs when the narrator focuses on the river Segura and observes that there are many herons in the river around Orihuela; and herons can even be found in an "acequia" (irrigation ditch) that is located at the start of the road that leads to Murcia. Juan Manuel's voice at this point remembers the time he hunted here in the "acequia" and in the chase his mule fell: "Et dize don Iohan que ya la fallo el y, et costo muy cara, que en queriendo acorrer a los falcones, cayo con el vn mulo en guisa que lo oviera matar."⁸⁶ "And Juan says that he already found this place, but it was a costly experience. Hot in the chase behind his falcons, his mule fell down and he had to kill it." Later in the narrative the narrator describes hunting spots in Cuenca.⁸⁷ Focusing on two lagoons between El Cañavate and Castillo de Garci Muñoz that

⁸⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 579:47–53.

⁸⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 580: 83–86.

⁸⁷ See Manuel Cardenal de Iracheta, "La geografía conquense del *Libro de la caza*," *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 4), 11–30; here 12. Manuel Cardenal de Iracheta explains that Juan Manuel's description of good and bad hunting spots in Cuenca focuses on the riverbanks and follows a general organizational plan: "En el obispado de Cuenca hace la descripción por *riberas*, lo cual da un singular interés geográfico y hasta científico a su relato. Enumera, en efecto, en este obispado, las *riberas* siguiendo un orden perfectamente claro y definido: comienza por el noroeste de la provincia –sistema hidrográfico del Tajo y del Guadiana– y sigue, describiendo un arco del Oeste a Este y de Norte a Sur, por Júcar y Cabriel; continua cerrando el arco de Este a Oeste, por Zancara y Gigüela, arco que acaba de cerrar de Sur a Norte, traspasando la divisoria del Guadiana y de sus afluentes, hasta la del Tajo." ("In the bishopric of Cuenca, the author organizes his description focusing on riverbanks, which gives geographical and scientific value to his narrative. He enumerates, in effect, the riverbanks, following an order that is perfectly clear and defined. He begins in the northeast part of the province – the hydrographic system of the Tajo and Guadiana rivers and their tributaries – and continues by closing that arc from East to West, through Zancara and Gigüela, which closes the arc from North to South, passing the division line of the Guadiana river and its tributaries, until reaching the Tajo river.") I used Iracheta's article, which provides an alphabetical list of the places in Cuenca that are mentioned in the *Libro de la caza*, for matching the modern place names to the Old Spanish place names.

are too big for hunting with falcons but good for hunting bustards, according to Juan Manuel, the same Juan Manuel recalls a hunting excursion there, with men and falcons, in which he killed at least four hundred bustards, and other times in which he killed forty or fifty of the birds:

mas para la caça de los gallarones dize don Iohan que es muy apuesta et sabrosa, et que el mato y en vn dia con aues et con omnes [mas] de quatro çientos gallarones, et otras vezes muchas que vinia por y de passada, que mataua quarenta o çinquenta.⁸⁸

[Juan Manuel says that they are good places for hunting bustards, and he himself killed at least four hundred of them in one day, in the company of men and falcons; other times, when on his way somewhere else, he stopped to kill forty or fifty.]⁸⁹

Juan Manuel's voice adds that in the Fall he has also hunted cranes in Arroyo de la Fuente de Mizoperes (588: 330–37); in a lagoon between Zancara and Villar de la Encina he has hunted ducks and bustards (588: 338–43); and in a lagoon in Montalvo he killed two flamingoes with a Peregrine falcon that his falconer Sancho Martinez brought with him (589: 379–83).

For the examples in the fourth category the memory process is imbedded like a Chinese box. While Juan Manuel remembers his own experiences in falconry, these experiences often include other people's experiences and stories, for example, his father's (Don Manuel) experiences. Juan Manuel was only two years old when his father died. His knowledge of his father as a hunter had to be passed on to him as stories by people in his family who knew him and who experienced hunting with him. It is not too exaggerated, in fact, if we understand this book as primarily a bonding experience between the author and his father and his father's brothers and nephews, some who Juan Manuel knew more than others, some who Juan Manuel never met or remember meeting, because he was too young when they died.

It appears that the author's primary contact and source for stories was his cousin don Juan, the one who in the book is qualified as a great hunter (in the prologue) or as the greatest hunter he ever knew (in chapter VIII). In the prologue he is mentioned first among his oral sources: "et [por] lo que oyo dezir al infante don Johan, que fue muy grant caçador."⁹⁰

Following him, falconers are mentioned who worked for either brother, the king Alfonso X or his father don Manuel: "et a falconeros que fueron del rey don

⁸⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 587: 302–13.

⁸⁹ I have given the most available translation that I have found of the term "gallarones." However, Fradejas Rueda explains that there has been no consensus regarding the identification of this bird. *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 197, n. 393.

⁹⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521:64–65.

Alfonso et del infante don Manuel, su padre.”⁹¹ The cousins did not belong to the same generation for Don Juan was 22 years older than Juan Manuel. Don Juan (as well as Sancho IV, another cousin) was the bridge for Juan Manuel that helped him connect to the generation of their fathers and uncles. The identification process, however, goes beyond both previous generations to include that of Juan Manuel’s grandfather, Fernando III, who is mentioned twice in chapter VIII.

The bonding experience is reinforced by actions that the book in part reproduces and that took place first among the males while hunting: direct experience (bonding with males from the same social class and from different social classes, bonding with the history of hunting in the royal family, bonding with the birds of prey, bonding with the topography, and bonding via the actual hunt, the killing of prey), and storytelling (which involves remembering, naming, counting, describing, sharing information and bragging or boasting). During hunting excursions the hunters tell each other stories related to hunting. Storytelling is an integral part of the experience of hunting.

Storytelling requires remembering events of the past and cannot take place without naming, naming, for example, kinds of falcons, proper names of falcons, falconers, companions in the hunt, family members, equipment, different practices, different prey, places, etc. There is counting, too, for example when the hunter counts how many birds of prey he has killed, of which we have seen examples. There is sharing information in the process of teaching and learning. For the most part, the older hunters teach the younger hunters, for example, Don Juan taught what he knew to his cousin, the author.

There is boasting in hunters’ stories. This boasting among hunters is well exemplified by Juan Manuel, for he brags in the book, as we have seen, and he describes bragging as a common practice among hunters. In chapter VIII, after describing how quickly he trained the Peregrine falcon named Picardit to kill crane on its own, Juan Manuel brags about another exploit, and then refrains himself from boasting about more of his prowess because he knows that he will be criticized for boasting, because hunters are known for boasting. The verb in Old Spanish is “*chufar*” and the noun for bragger is “*chufador*”: “Pero non lo quiere el aqui nonbrar por que non lo tengan por muy chufador; ca esta es vna cosa que aponen mucho a los cacadores.”⁹² (“ But he does not want to mention it here, because people will think that he is a bragger, which hunters are known and criticized for”). He adds emphatically that he is not boasting, that everything he has said is true: “Pero dize don Iohan que en todo quanto a dicho fasta aqui que

⁹¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 521: 65–66.

⁹² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 557: 255–57.

de buena verdat non a dicho chufa ninguna."⁹³ ("But don Juan says that everything he has said up to now is the honest truth and none of it is boasting.")

The marvelous is a dimension in the hunting experience that Juan Manuel refers to a number of times in the *Libro de la caza*. The dilemma is how to describe the marvelous experience without being accused of exaggerating and bragging? This is why Juan Manuel insists that he is telling the truth. The marvelous is not just about skills and prowess, but also about all the variables working and coming together to create a great, one of a kind and unforgettable experience. For example, the specific memory that Juan Manuel recalls after talking about Picardit is described as miraculous; more miraculous experiences could have happened, if the author had not lost the two Merlins who performed so well.⁹⁴ Juan Manuel places all the responsibility on the interlocutor and reader, who need to believe.

In the famous paragraph in chapter XII about the reputation that hunters have for being liars (braggers, boasters), the finger is pointed at the listeners and the readers. The third person narrator praises hunting as an experience in which marvelous and amazing things can and do happen. These marvelous and amazing things are true. The listeners and readers are divided in two camps, those who believe that the stories are true and those who don't. The latter are making a big mistake and are sinning. Juan Manuel's voice interjects with a quote in Latin in order to criticize the unbelievers:

Et dize don Iohan que a esto acaesçe segund dize un philosopho que fue de Çerdenna que dize asi: "*Vituperator sçiençie testis est ygnorançie*." Et esto quiere dezir que el mal traedor de la sçiençia que es testigo de la neçedat.⁹⁵

[And don Juan says that he can apply to these unbelievers a quote by a philosopher from Sardinia that goes like this: "*Vituperator sçiençie testis est ygnorançie*." And it means that the person who does not understand science is witness to ignorance.]

Juan Manuel creates an aura of the marvelous around the memory of his cousin don Juan from the very beginning of the book. He was both a great hunter (the prologue) and the greatest hunter the author has ever known (chapter VIII). In this chapter a memory with don Juan is prefaced by Juan Manuel with the words "et

⁹³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 557: 257–58.

⁹⁴ "Otrosi dize que fizo dos esmerejones que acorriessen [et] enpenolauan en la grua, et cada que la grua muria, fallauan a ellos en ella assi commo a los otros falcones, et tiene, sinon por que los perdio vna vez que los lanço a vna guardarniz en el campo de Xorquera et se fueron perder con ella en guisa que los nunca fallo, [et] cuyda que por ventura fiziera tal cosa que fuera marabilla de dezir" (557: 249–54). (" And he also says that he made two Merlins attack and bring down (without carrying) the crane, and as the crane was dying, the Marlins returned to it bravely as did the other falcons, and he believes had he not lost the two birds in Jorquera when he threw them up to attack a stork, they would have performed other unbelievable and marvelous feats.")

⁹⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 589: 368–72.

cuenta lo por muy grant marabilla" ("and he tells it as a miracle"). The memory is also closed with the word "marabilla": "mas la grand marabilla non fue sinon en tan poco rato pudo andar tan grand camino."⁹⁶ ("What was marvelous about it was that the Peregrine falcon was able to fly so far in so little time"). A great hunter has great falcons, like this marvelous falcon named Perlado that belonged to Don Juan's and that is the protagonist of the miraculous story. Juan Manuel was there to witness the unforgettable event:

Pero dize don Iohan, et cuenta lo por muy grant marabilla, que vio a vn falcon sacre que traya el ynfante don Iohan, que llamauan Perlado et traya un falconero que dizien Pero Nuñes, que andando vn dia entre don Iohan, el ynfante, et a la caça cabo de Leon, en el rio de Bernesga, que fallaron dos garças ayuntadas et que les lançaron vn falcon sacre malo⁹⁷ que traya vn falconero que dizian Garcya Ferrandiz; et desque fueron muy altos, que lançaron un nebli de don Iohan que traya vn falconero que dizian Ferrant Gomes et que subio con ellas tanto que quando las ovo vençidas, que paresçia el falcon muy abes et traxo la vna et desque fue en tierra con ella, que la otra que fincaua muy poco mayor que vna palloma; et desque lançaron entonce aquel falcon sacre del infante don Iohan, que la vençio tan ayna que ante fue | con ella que la perdiess[e]n de vista; et si omne lo pudiesse asmar por çierto, bien dirie don Iohan que si la garça andaua a quinze mill estados, que la ovo el falcon alcançada ante que llegasse a mill' estados mas, que fuessen por todos XVI mill' estados, et dize que ante nin despues nunca tal marabilla el viera fazer a falcon nin a girifalte nin a sacre nin a nebli; [que] bien bi[o] que muchos falcones fueron lançados a garça muy alta et que la mataron tan alta que non paresçia el falcon nin la garça, mas la grand marabilla non fue sinon en tan poco rato pudo andar tan grand camino.⁹⁸

[Don Juan Manuel says that he remembers the most marvelous feat performed by a Saker falcon that belonged to the prince don Juan. Its name was Perlado and it was in the care of the falconer known as Pero Nuñez. This all happened one day during a hunting excursion on the riverbank of the river Bernesga next to León. When they encountered two herons mating together they sent a bad (male) Saker falcon that was in the care of the falconer Garcya Ferrandiz in pursuit of the herons. When they were very high in the sky, they sent up a Peregrine falcon that belonged to Juan Manuel and that was in the care of a falconer by the name of Ferrant Gomes. This falcon flew so high that when it reached the herons that it could barely be seen. It brought down to the ground one of the herons. The other heron looked the size of a dove from the ground. That's when they sent in its pursuit the Saker falcon that belonged to prince don Juan, and to everybody's astonishment it flew up to the heron so fast that they lost sight of it. And though unbelievable as it is, Juan Manuel would bet that if the heron

⁹⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 555:170–71.

⁹⁷ See José Manuel Fradejas Rueda's, *Don Juan Manuel y el Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 167, n. 217. In the Fradejas Rueda edition the word used here is not "malo" but "ma[s]lo", which means, according to Fradejas Rueda, the male.

⁹⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 554–55: 150–71.

had been up in the sky fifteen thousand “estados” the falcon had to fly up another thousand “estados” to reach the heron, which adds up to a total of sixteen thousand “estados” that the falcon flew. He (Juan Manuel) says that never before and never since has seen any falcon of any kind, not a Gyrfalcon nor a Peregrine nor a Saker falcon, perform such a miraculous feat. Sure he has seen many falcons reach and kill herons that were very high in the sky so that neither could be seen, but marvelous was that it flew so high up in so little time.]

In chapter XII Juan Manuel remembers another marvelous event that happened at the bank of a lagoon in Cuenca, between Zancara and Villar del Encina, while in the company of his cousin and other knights and squires, among them Iohan Rodrigues de Villovos and Iohan Velez de Vegara. The story involves a “rosinor” (a young sparrowhawk) that caught a young stork still in its nest.⁹⁹ The falcon did not let the stork go even when the stork began to fly.

The fascination with this memory seems somewhat adolescent, for it is hard to see what is marvelous in the event. Perhaps Juan Manuel was very young when this happened, and it made that big of an impression on him. He insists on both its marvelous nature and that it is true that it happened: “Et dize don Iohan que si el dixiese toda la manera commo esto se fazia, que los que lo oyessen lo ternian por maravilla, mas que dize el lo que acaesçio et que es verdat.”¹⁰⁰ (“Don Juan says that if he were to tell the entire story about what happened, that those who heard the story would think it miraculous, but he says this really happened the way he said it did.”)

⁹⁹ See José María Castro y Calvo, *Don Juan Manuel: Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 134. Castro y Calvo discards the possibility that “rusenor” refers to “ruiseñor” (nightingale). Relying on other treatises he concludes that it refers to sparrowhawks that are taken from their nests in trees “roçinas.” The adjective should qualify “gauilan”, because the Peregrine falcon does not nest in Spain.

¹⁰⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 588: 355–58.

Don Juan told the author stories about his father don Manuel, a few of which are compressed in a long paragraph in chapter VIII.¹⁰¹ These stories also make don Manuel bigger than life:

In Murcia don Juan saw a Saker falcon that belonged to don Manuel—when both don Manuel and king Alfonso were residing in Murcia— that could kill the crane when it was flying in circles and in zigzag very high up in the sky.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ See Derek W. Lomax, “El padre de don Juan Manuel,” *Don Juan Manuel: VII centenario* (see note 32), 176. Derek W. Lomax summarizes the life of Don Manuel in this manner, contrasting the real don Manuel (good and bad) with the idealized father in Juan Manuel’s books: “Al revisar lo que de su vida se sabe, parece un hombre bastante gris. Hijo menor, mimado por su hermano Alfonso, con devociones, amistades y aficiones convencionales, casi nunca se destaca en actuación individual, y casi parece un peón que Alfonso mueve a su antojo en el tablero de la política externa y matrimonial. Sin embargo, Gregorio X le consideró hombre de gran influencia, y si las crónicas oficiales no le presentan con tanta personalidad como, por ejemplo, su hermano Enrique o el Maestre Pelayo Pérez, quizás es por tener sus propios prejuicios contra él, o contra su hijo. En los escritos de Juan Manuel, o en la *Crónica anónima de Silos*, en cambio, adquiere el valor de un príncipe honrado con el que se puede contrastar la bajeza moral de Alfonso X o Violante y alentar una ideología aristocrática y pretrastamarista.” Esto se resalta aún más en las profecías de Merlin, importación politizada de las leyendas artúricas; y es muy posible que las relaciones de Manuel con Inglaterra no se limitasen a novias y capellanes, sino que también ayudasen en la transmisión a Castilla de tales leyendas (19). Pero éstas son meras especulaciones. Hasta que sepamos más, lo sensato sería considerar que Manuel legó a su hijo una riqueza y un poderío acumulados a través de treinta años prudentes (¿apolíticos?), una mesnada de vasallos, unas tradiciones orales, históricas y literarias, y una madre italiana cuya influencia sobre el gran escritor un día tendrá que calibrarse. Queda para cada lector decidir en qué medida Juan Manuel aceptó, y en qué medida, reaccionó contra esta herencia.” [“ Reviewing what is known about his life, he seems to be a mediocre man. Youngest son of Fernando III, spoiled by his brother the king Alfonso X, conventional in his choice of religious practices, friendships and pastimes, he hardly ever shines for his individuality, and rather acts more like a pawn that the king Alfonso moves at will in the political arena of foreign relations and arranged matrimonies. Nevertheless, Pope Gregorio X considered him to be a man of great influence, and if the royal chronicles do not portray him with as much personality as his brother don Enrique or Maestre Pelayo Pérez, for example, maybe it is because the king was in the end prejudiced against him for supporting his son Sancho’s claim to the throne. In Juan Manuel’s writings, or in the *Crónica anónima de Silos*, on the other hand, he acquires the stature of a honored prince who is contrasted with Alfonso X or Violante, who are portrayed as morally inferior, in order to give wings to an aristocratic ideology that later fed into the Trastámara’s claims to the throne. This is especially emphasized in the prophecies of Merlin, a politicized import of the Arthurian legends; and it is even possible that Manuel’s relations with England were not limited to matrimonial prospects and chaplains, that is, that he indeed had a hand in the importation of the Arthurian legends into Castile. However, these are speculations in the end. Until we know more, what can be said for certain is that Manuel passed on to his son wealth and power that were accumulated over thirty years of prudent (or apolitical?) action, an armed retinue of vassals, oral traditions, both historical and literary, and an Italian mother, whose influence on the great writer still needs to be measured. It is up to every reader to decide to what degree Juan Manuel accepted or rejected this inheritance.”]

¹⁰² *Obras completas I* (see note 1), 559: 294–99.

Don Manuel and his son don Alfonso Manuel had a hard time running after this falcon because of the irrigation ditches in the "huertas" (gardens) of Murcia.¹⁰³

It is said that don Manuel was the best hunter and the hunter who had the most birds.¹⁰⁴

Don Juan swore that when he visited king Alfonso and don Manuel in Sevilla he saw that don Manuel had many falcons there with him.¹⁰⁵

When don Juan left for Castilla and arrived in Medellín he found that don Manuel had 160 falcons residing there and participating in hunting excursions, because Medellín is a very good place for hunting.¹⁰⁶

He had more falcons in Medellín than in Sevilla.¹⁰⁷

It was going to be a miraculous feat to have a leader falcon emerge in three to four years.¹⁰⁸

While don Juan is the main source for stories about his father, Juan Manuel experiences or recreates in the book his dead father's presence in other ways, for example, naming the places and properties that he inherited from his father, some of which bear his name.¹⁰⁹ In chapter XII, when describing the good and bad hunting grounds in the bishopric of Cartagena, the author mentions one of the lagoons close to the port of Cartagena, which is called "Cabeçuelos que dizen de don Manuel"¹¹⁰ and an irrigation ditch that his father had constructed there ("et en el acequia que don Manuel mando fazer").¹¹¹

Certainly a good many of the places that Juan Manuel mentions and describes as being either bad or good hunting grounds are his properties, either inherited or acquired by him during his lifetime. In his article, "Los dominios de don Juan Manuel," Angel Luis de Molina y Molina provides a detailed listing of these properties as well as an historical explanation of how the author acquired them, including the relevant information on the author's involvement in politics in Castilla and Aragon and in the Reconquest of Murcia.¹¹² Molina y Molina writes that in the bishopric of Cartagena Juan Manuel's properties included those he

¹⁰³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 299–302.

¹⁰⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 302–04.

¹⁰⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 304–06.

¹⁰⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 306–09.

¹⁰⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 309–10.

¹⁰⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 559: 310–11.

¹⁰⁹ Juan Torres Fontes reproduces Don Manuel's will in his article "El testamento del infante don Manuel," *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana* VII (1981): 11–21.

¹¹⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 579: 71–72.

¹¹¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 579: 72–73.

¹¹² "Los dominios de Don Juan Manuel," *Don Juan Manuel: VII centenario* (see note 32), 215–26.

inherited from his father, "Aspe, Novelda, Elche, Elda, Crevillente, Villena, and Yecla," and those he acquired, "Cartagena, Librilla, Molina Seca, etc."¹¹³

In the bishopric of Cuenca he owned "Castejón, Torralba, Buendía, Puerto Camdaljub, Villar del Saz, Huete, Montalvo, Zafra del Zánacara, La Hinojosa, Puebla de Almenara, Castillo de Garcimuñoz, Alarcón, Belmonte, El Cañavate, Iniesta y El Provencio."¹¹⁴ On the other hand, according to Maria de los Llanos Martínez Carrillo, in "El obispado de Sigüenza en el *Libro de la caza*: un itinerario geográfico," the author did not own property in the bishopric of Sigüenza, which is the third and last bishopric described in the incomplete *Libro de la caza*. However, he had political interests in the region (which he exploited as tutor to both kings Fernando IV and Alfonso XI during their minorities) because of its proximity to Villena.¹¹⁵

The way Villena is presented, as we saw above, is especially descriptive, using the two spaces, the alcazar and the countryside. The people who happen to be on the top of the alcazar can see the men who are hunting, and the men who are hunting can see the people at the alcazar. We can sense the pleasure that it gives Juan Manuel to have this property that, with the alcazar at the center, lends itself so well to his favorite sport. Villena, explains Molina and Molina, was practically an autonomous seigniorship situated between Castilla and Aragón, and which the author inherited from his father. It was under the jurisdiction of Aragón, a situation that Juan Manuel knew how to use to his advantage:

La habilidad de don Juan y sus pocos escrúpulos le permitieron desde muy pronto gozar de un señorío a caballo entre Aragón y Castilla, explotar en su propio beneficio las diferencias entre ambos reinos y construir un estado prácticamente autónomo.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Angel Luis de Molina y Molina, "Los dominios de don Juan Manuel" (see note 110), 222.

¹¹⁴ Angel Luis de Molina y Molina, "Los dominios de don Juan Manuel" (see note 110), 220.

¹¹⁵ María de los Llanos Martínez Carrillo, "El obispado de Sigüenza en el *Libro de la caza*: un itinerario geográfico," (see note 36), 190. "Por estas razones personales y por estar situado el obispado de Sigüenza al norte del marquesado de Villena, del que don Juan Manuel era titular, y compartir con él su estratégica posición de tierras encabalgadas en la frontera castellana-aragonesa, cuyo valor pudo comprobar más minuciosamente en las posteriores temporadas en que residió en Aragón como vasallo desnaturalizado de su rey Alfonso XI, don Juan Manuel se presenta en el "Libro de la Caza" como un innato geógrafo que utilizando su observación legó a la posteridad un buen ejemplo de geografía descriptiva." ["For these personal reasons and because Sigüenza was situated to the north of the Marquisate of Villena, Juan Manuel's property, and for sharing with Villena a strategic location, land that was on the border between Castilla and Aragón, the value of which the author was able to appreciate many times personally during the years he was estranged from the Castilian king Alfonso XI and residing in Aragón. Juan Manuel presents himself in the *Libro de la caza* as an expert on geography. Utilizing his power of observation he hands down to posterity a good example of descriptive geography."]

¹¹⁶ "Los dominios de Don Juan Manuel" (see note 110), 221.

[Juan Manuel's abilities and his lack of scruples allowed him early on to enjoy a seigniorship in between Aragón and Castilla and to exploit for his personal benefit the conflicts between the two kingdoms, making Villena practically an autonomous state.]

The *Libro de la caza* is indeed an extraordinarily valuable book, not only for its place in the history of books on falconry, but also because of how personal it is. It not only provides biographical information, but it also has saved in its own fashion Juan Manuel's voice talking to the scribe and to its readers through time. It also shows us what was close to the author's heart; it shows us part of what he loved about being male: interacting with falcons, killing prey, having the resources to carry on the aristocratic sport, communing with other males, falconers and hunters, belonging to a royal family of hunters, knowing and admiring his uncle don Juan, and being his father's son.

Conclusion. Males Educating Males: Hunting and Books

Diego Catalán and Germán Orduna explain the important place the *Libro de la caza* has in the author's development as an educator. It is with this book that the author became confident that he could follow in his uncle Alfonso X's footsteps to compose books for educating others. Because hunting excited him, because he was an expert, because his identity was intimately connected to hunting, hunting propelled his career as a composer of books aimed at educating other noble males. As we have seen, the principal objective of the *Libro de la caza* is to recall knowledge on falconry gained from written and oral sources, organize it, make it contemporary, and pass it on with the warning that the falconer ultimately needs to use his own judgment.

What attracts about the *Libro de la caza*, and what makes it so personal and alive, is that it captures Juan Manuel's own education in the sport of falconry. The author recalls what his own teachers in the sport taught him. He insists nevertheless that his main teacher was experience itself, and he describes general and specific experiences. On the other hand, he also incorporates written sources (without naming them) that were part of his education on falconry, or that he made part of his education.

As mentioned above, Juan Manuel's teachers were family members (mainly his cousin Don Juan) and falconers who were associated with the royal households. Recall that one of these falconers was "Johannete", who revealed to him the curative power of the white ointment and taught him how to make it (chapter XI). Another falconer-teacher, Remon Durche, is mentioned in chapter VIII, who was the falconer who knew the most about hunting cranes:

Otrosi dize que quanto sabe desta caça de las gruas que todo lo mas et lo mejor aprendio de don Remon Durche, que fue el omne que el nunca vio que mas sopiesse de caça de gruas.¹¹⁷

[He also says that most of what he knows about hunting cranes he learned from Ramon Durche, whose formidable expertise has never been matched by anyone else he has ever met.]

The falconer Remon Durche has more importance in the book than at first apparent.¹¹⁸ He taught Juan Manuel a new method to hunt cranes, a method that he has followed ever since:

. . . et adelante dira commo solia caçar las gruas en Castiella ante que don Remon Durche viniessse, et commo mostro a don Iohan faser[lo] en la guisa que agora vsa don Iohan caçar las gruas.¹¹⁹

[. . . and he will explain ahead how cranes used to be hunted in Castilla before Remon Durche came on the scene, and how don Juan hunts them now, according to how Remon Durche taught him to hunt them.]

The new method of hunting cranes taught by Remon Durche is contrasted with the old method, both described in stages incorporating historical events in the royal family:

The narrator writes that Juan Manuel says that he heard don Juan his cousin and Gonçalo Royz de Ysla, a principal falconer who used to work for the king Alfonso and later for king Sancho, and Pero Lopez, a falconer who was employed by don Manuel, and many other falconers from king Alfonso's time, talk about how 12 or more falcons were used to hunt crane, and the falcons caught the cranes when they were either still on the ground or flying very low. The leader of the falcons kept hold of the crane until the dog arrived. If the crane was not killed during that first attempt and landing, the other falcons did not follow the crane.¹²⁰

He himself used to hunt this way, except that by this time not so many falcons were used. The first falcon was set loose when the cranes were still on the ground, like before.¹²¹

A year later, his uncle don Enrique died. He inherited a falcon of his by the name of Galvan that used to kill cranes successfully, but it was trained to pursue and attack when the cranes were still on the ground.¹²²

¹¹⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 259–61.

¹¹⁸ See Fradejas Rueda, *Libro de la caza* (see note 3), here 171, n. 243. Fradejas Rueda identifies Remón Durche as possibly Ramón Urg, the mayor of the alcazar of Villena, Juan Manuel's property.

¹¹⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 261–64.

¹²⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 264–75.

¹²¹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 275–78.

¹²² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 278–81.

Another year later Remon Durche came to work for him. This happened during the month of August when the king of Castilla, the king of Aragón and the king of Portugal met in Agreda and in Tarragona.¹²³

Remon Durche took to Alarcón (property of the author) to train two falcons that belonged to Juan Manuel, Plomate and Real. He trained them to kill cranes when they were flying in all directions.¹²⁴

It was at a stream between Palomares and Buruanos that Juan Manuel saw for the first time a crane killed in this manner.¹²⁵

Ever since then he has been hunting cranes in this manner that Remon Durche taught him.¹²⁶

The narrator says that Juan Manuel also says that he heard his cousin don Juan talk about a Saker falcon that belonged to don Manuel that used to kill cranes when they flew high up, which was unusual for the falcons of that time were trained kill when they cranes were flying low.¹²⁷

We can see that Juan Manuel inserts his father's falcon into the narrative to paint it, and likewise paint his father, as a precursor to the new method that came later. They were ahead of their time. What this part of the narrative does is delineate two historical periods with regard to hunting methods, a "before" Remon Durche and an "after" Remon Durche. In the "before" period don Manuel's falcon hunted in a manner that announced the coming of the new era that Remon Durche's teaching would bring. Because Remon Durche was in Juan Manuel's employment and because Remon Durche was his teacher, the author views himself as the agent most responsible (after the teacher himself) for bringing about this change.

The mention of his uncle don Enrique's death is in the middle of the narrative. The falcon that he inherited from his uncle was an excellent hunter of cranes but still trained in the old fashion. Don Enrique's death resonates in the segment of narrative and in the entire chapter, not only because of the historical information that it provides (Don Enrique died in 1303), but also because it seems to have made a big impression on Juan Manuel, who at the time was 21 years old. At the end of the chapter the narrator remarks that don Enrique, along with his brothers, was a great hunter during his lifetime.¹²⁸

The other historical reference in the passage is identified by José Manuel Fradejas Rueda as the meeting in 1304 that took place in Torrellas between

¹²³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 282–84.

¹²⁴ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 285–89.

¹²⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 289–91.

¹²⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 291–92.

¹²⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 558: 294–99.

¹²⁸ Juan Manuel mentions his uncle don Enrique also in *El conde Lucanor* (story IX) and in *Libro de las armas*.

Fernando IV of Castilla, Jaime II of Aragón and Dinis of Portugal in 1304.¹²⁹

According to Francisco Javier Díez de Revenga and Angel Luis Molina y Molina, this meeting was important to Juan Manuel because it marked the end of the political conflict between Alfonso de la Cerda (supported by Jaime II) and Fernando IV, in which properties of his in Murcia were at stake.¹³⁰ It is interesting to note that Juan Manuel, along with his cousin don Juan and his uncle don Enrique, both mentioned with affection in the *Libro de la caza*, had been involved in the conflict, supporting Alfonso de la Cerda in his quest to be named king of Castile. We can see in the *Libro de la caza* that the author establishes an affinity between the three nobles because of their shared interest in hunting, and also because of their alliance in politics.¹³¹ Otherwise, he would not have mentioned

¹²⁹ *Libro de la caza* (see note 3), 171, n. 245.

¹³⁰ Alfonso de la Cerda and his brother Fernando de la Cerda promised Jaime II of Aragón the kingdom of Murcia in exchange for his support. Jaime II began his invasion of Murcia in 1296. He first conquered Alicante, and then the villages in Elda and Novelda. Elche was also attacked, but Juan Manuel negotiated with the Aragonese king, who took over the jurisdiction of Elche, leaving the property itself in Juan Manuel's name. He later negotiated with María de Molina the concession of the town of Alarcón, to make up for his loss of the jurisdiction of Elche. In 1300 Juan Manuel married doña Isabel, Jaime II's daughter with Esclaramunda de Foix. In 1301 he participated in a plot with Maria de Molina and her son Fernando IV, still during his minority, to enter Murcia and take prisoner Jaime II of Aragón, but the plot failed. In the same year his first wife died. In 1302 he allied himself with his uncle don Enrique, don Juan his cousin and other nobles who supported Alfonso de la Cerda, who was calling himself king of Castile, still with the support of the Aragonese king. In 1303 he was betrothed to Constanza of Aragón, another daughter of Jaime II. The dowry included the jurisdiction of Elche and other properties in Murcia that had originally been his. When the kings of Castile, Aragón and Portugal met in 1304 in Torrellas Murcia was divided between Aragón and Castile. Juan Manuel was able to keep his properties in the parts that were adjudicated to Castile, including Yecla, which made the divisory line awkward. The territories that were located north of the river Segura were incorporated into the kingdom of Aragón. Juan Manuel's property, the seignior of Villena was also respected in the treaty of Torrellas. See "Don Juan Manuel y el reino de Murcia: notas al *Libro de la caza*," (see note 79). See also Juan Torres Fontes, "Murcia y Don Juan Manuel: tensiones y conflictos," *Don Juan Manuel: VII centenario* (see note 32), 353–84; Isabel García Díaz, "Lorca, Don Juan Manuel y Alfonso XI," *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana* XXXI (2007): 69–93; Manuel García Fernández, "Jaime II y la minoría de Alfonso XI (1312–25): Sus relaciones con la sociedad política castellana," Departamento de Historia Medieval y Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas, Universidad de Sevilla, <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/oaiart?codigo=58245>; and Manuel González Jiménez, "La sucesión al trono de Castilla: 1275–1304," http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/6827/1/HM_11_10.pdf (last accessed on December 26, 2011).

¹³¹ Don Juan, along with Maria de Molina, his sister-in-law, and don Pedro, her son and his nephew, was Alfonso XI's regent from 1312 to 1319, the year both uncle and nephew died in the battle against the Moors in Vega, Granada. Don Juan was seignior of Vizcaya and was leader of the band of nobles that wanted to protect the rights of the "vieja nobleza" (nobles of the old order). Among these nobles were, according to Manuel García Fernández (see note 127), Don Juan's wife, María de Haro, his nephew, Don Lope de Haro, don Juan Nuñez de Lara, don Fernando de la Cerda,

them. The *Libro de la caza* has a political dimension that is hinted at superficially: the “contra este tan noble rey” in the prologue and the hunting companions Juan Manuel choses to mention. At the deeper and more intense level is the naming of properties that Juan Manuel owns, which we discussed in part three of this article.

In the same chapter VIII, right after the first contrast made between the old and the new, another historical demarcation is made between the old and the new. Juan Manuel recalls hearing that before his grandfather, the king Fernando the Saint, married his grandmother, the queen Beatriz, herons were hunted and killed with goshawks. After they were married they were hunted with falcons. The person who brought about this change was Rodrigo Gomes from Galicia. When the royal couple's sons, don Alfonso (later king), don Enrique, don Felipe and Don Manuel, started hunting, they also hunted herons with falcons. Now, in Juan Manuel's time, herons are also hunted with falcons, but in a new and different manner, which is “escripto en este libro” (“written in this book”). Just because they are old, the old ways are not dismissed, rather they are given their due credit as antecedents of the new ways.

The book's intention is partly to honor the past, capture it with the stories that the author recalls, and pass it on to the present generation, no matter how applicable in the present the information is or not. On the other hand, there is knowledge that is always applicable, that never goes out of fashion. The book fulfills its responsibility of passing on this knowledge. At the same time, it is necessary to disseminate the knowledge of a new way of hunting, which is practiced by the author and his companions, and which was in turn taught to them

Sancho Sánchez Velasco, and later Juan Manuel and the queen doña Constanza of Portugal. In the other band of nobles were those who wanted to aid in the strengthening of the monarchy, and they were don Pedro, María de Molina's son, don Alfonso de Meneses and his son don Tello, don Juan Alfonso de Haro, Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña, the Grand Masters of the military orders and the majority of the nobility in Andalucía. (See “Jaime II y la minoría de Alfonso XI (1312–1325): Sus relaciones con la sociedad política castellana,” (see note 127); here 143.) Don Pedro was also Jaime II's son-in-law, because he was married to doña María of Aragón, the Aragonese king's oldest daughter. Don Pedro and Juan Manuel were archenemies, the former alienating the latter from any participation in Fernando IV's minority between 1312 and 1319. In 1314 Juan Manuel joined the band of nobles headed by his cousin don Juan. The second team of regents between 1319 and 1321 were María de Molina, Don Felipe, María de Molina's son and Juan Manuel. The third team is formed in 1321 when María de Molina dies. Don Juan el Tuerto, friend of Juan Manuel and son of Juan Manuel's late cousin don Juan, is named regent along with Juan Manuel and don Felipe. Manuel García Díaz writes about this situation: “El poder llegó a tal grado de disgregación que cada tutor gobernaba una parte del reino y cobrando los impuestos de esa zona en el nombre del rey, pero en provecho propio.” See “Lorca, Don Juan Manuel y Alfonso XI” (see note 130); here 76: “The power shared by the three tutors reached a level of disintegration such that each regent governed a different part of the kingdom and collected taxes in the king's name but used the taxes for their own purposes.”

by a few very talented men. The author leaves room to incorporate later any new hunting practices that the younger generation of hunters might develop:

que [a]si commo fizo escriuir lo que el vio et oyo en esta arte de la caça, que si alguna cosa viere daqui adelante que se mude o se faga mejor et mas estranna mente, que asi lo fare escriuir.¹³²

[And the same way in which he had someone write down what he saw and what he heard regarding the art of falconry, he will do the same for any change or strange new practice he happens to see in the future.]

Juan Manuel represents himself in the *Libro de la caza* as a pupil who has become a teacher, simply because this is the natural order. He gives credit to his teachers for the knowledge they passed on to him, but clarifies that experience has been his most important teacher and his own judgment his most important guide. The learning process never stops. He is sure to learn more in the future from other hunters and falconers.

It was an act of love for the sport of hunting that motivated Juan Manuel to compose the *Libro de la caza*:

Et dize don Iohan que tanto se paga el de la caça et por tan aprouechosa la tiene para los grandes sennores et avn para todos los otros, si quieren vsar della commo deuen et pertenesçe a sus estados, que [a]si commo fizo escriuir¹³³

[“And Juan Manuel says that he loves hunting so much, and that he is convinced that it is very beneficial to noblemen, and even to others who are not noble, only if they practice the sport in a manner befitting their station, that the same way he had someone write down”]

He composed the book starting perhaps with notes that he began jotting down or dictating when he was young. As he matured as a hunter, or after he matured as a hunter, another phase of the composition of the book took place, a phase in which the author could represent himself (with help from the scribe and possibly from a falconer friend) as an experienced hunter and as a teacher on the subject of falconry. The book’s readers or listeners are males, falconers from different social classes and noblemen who hunt with falcons. The book is a wonderful technology for learning and teaching, yet Juan Manuel reminds his readers of the need to use their own judgment, ever aware that any didactic book has as its main limitation its inability to teach everything on a certain subject. A book is limited and finite whereas experience is always unfolding, often unpredictably and not like the situations posited in the book.

¹³² *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 560: 341–44.

¹³³ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 560: 338–41.

At the beginning of the book hunting is described with four adjectives: “nobles et apuestas et sabrosas et aprobechosas”: “noble, beautiful, pleasurable, and useful.” Perhaps by noble Juan Manuel means it is a sport that has traditionally been practiced by royalty and noblemen or that it is sport that ennobles those who practice it.¹³⁴ He does affirm that hunting with falcons is nobler than hunting with goshawks, and among the falcons the noblest of them all is the “girlfalte.” Juan Manuel makes a connection between the noble quality of the sport with the pleasure that it gives, which then makes the sport beautiful. It is nobler to hunt with falcons than with goshawks because falcons kill herons after the goshawks drop them, and the manner in which they kill herons is pleasurable and beautiful to watch. The connection between pleasure and beauty is reinforced a few lines down in this passage. Because the falcon takes more time in killing the heron than the goshawk does, more pleasure is derived from watching and participating. This pleasure that lasts longer makes the sport beautiful, or the longer time that it takes increases the pleasure at watching what is beautiful:

Et por que en todas las cosas en que ha plazer quanto mas duran son de mayor plazer, por ende es [de] mayor plazer esta caça con los falcones que con los azores et por esso mismo es mas apuesta.¹³⁵

[And because the things that last longer give more pleasure than the things that last little, hunting with falcons gives more pleasure than hunting with goshawks, and this is why it is also more beautiful to watch.]

The narrator emphasizes the pleasure men experience when they watch the falcons kill the cranes, watch the dogs run to help the falcons, and watch the falconers, the horsemen and the men on mules all run in the same direction. The narrator describes the excitement of the culminating moment of the hunt, when everybody moves in that one direction toward the caught prey:

Ca muy pocos son los que veen quando los falcones van con las gruas et la apartan et la derriban, et veen commo sus conpannas vienen acorrer a la derribada, et entienden el peligro en que los falcones seran sinon fueren acorridos, que alla non acorran todos, lo vno por matar la grua, lo al por acorrer los falcones, lo al por el plazer que toman de los falcones et de los canes quando bien se ayudan los vnos a los otros. Por ende corren alla todos quanto pueden et non catan por do van; dellos çahondan et estan en

¹³⁴ See the contribution to this volume by Jacqueline Stuhmiller. According to Jacqueline Stuhmiller, in the *Livre de chasse* by Gaston Phébus, Count of Foix, the noble hunter (in this case, of big game) has mastery that is honest and not tricky: “Ultimately, the noble and gentle hunter does not rely on elaborate contraptions or stratagems, but, like the knight, confronts his foes openly and honestly” (511). This understanding of the noble hunter is not very different than that found in Juan Manuel. Hunting expertly with falcons ennobles the hunter.

¹³⁵ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 526: 19–21.

grand priesa, dellos caen et vanse | les las bestias, los otros corren quanto pueden. Et assi por todas estas cosas es caça muy plazentera de veer.¹³⁶

[Very few people can resist running to see the falcons attack and bring down the cranes, to see the companions of the falcon run to the falcon's rescue, understanding the danger that the falcons are in if they were not aided. Every animal and every human is convening on the scene, some to kill the crane, some to help the falcons, some for the pleasure of watching the falcons and the dogs help each other out. This is why everybody runs over and they don't always look where they are going. They are excited and in a hurry. Some of them fall and their horse or mule runs away from them. Others run as much and as fast as they can. And it is fun to watch all of this excitement happen.]

The connection between pleasure and usefulness is not made as clearly in the *Libro de la caza* as it is in chapter XXXXI of the *Libro del cauallero et del escudero*, "Commo el cauallero ançiano responde al cauallero nouel que cosa son las aves." ("How the old knight explained to the novice knight what birds are.") It is interesting to listen to the character of the old knight explain to the novice knight that he is passionate about hunting, which brings benefits: "Et por que yo entendia que esto cumplia mucho al mi estado, vselo mucho et otrosi avia ende grant voluntad."¹³⁷ ("And because I understood that hunting was useful to my noble position, I practiced it a lot, and I did so because it pleased me.") It is useful exercise for the knight and a good and healthy use of the time he has for leisure: "Mas quando al non ha de fazer de los tiempos que se passan baldios, non a ninguno tan bien puesto para los caualleros commo lo que ponen en monte o en caça."¹³⁸ ("When he has leisure time at his disposal, there is no better way for the knight to use this time than hunting big game or hunting with falcons.")

The knight should be self-disciplined, because hunting is so pleasurable that it can become an obsession and interfere with his other responsibilities: "Ca non deue omne por la caça dexar ninguno otro fecho mayor que le aproueche o le enpesça a la fazienda o a la onra o la pro."¹³⁹ ("Man should not lose himself in the sport of hunting so as to neglect his other responsibilities, which could damage his estate, his honor or his benefit.")

This long passage in the *maistrise* also explains the relationship between free will, pleasure and usefulness. It is a wonderful situation when with free will a man chooses to be responsible to himself and to society and he is able to derive pleasure from it: "Pero al que Dios faza tanta merçed quell da voluntad para fazer buenas obras et aprouechosas para el alma et para el cuerpo, es de buena ventura en

¹³⁶ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 527: 29–39.

¹³⁷ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 90: 14–16.

¹³⁸ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 91: 54–57.

¹³⁹ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 91: 52–54.

ello."¹⁴⁰ ("The man who God graces by giving him the will to do good deeds that are beneficial for his body and for his soul is very fortunate.")

For Juan Manuel hunting in moderation was a beneficial pastime that provided pleasure. He hunted because it was part of his education and a common aristocratic pastime, but also because he wanted to. He chose to hunt using his free will. There is a strong correspondence in this respect between hunting and composing books. They are both activities that Juan Manuel chose to engage in during the time he had left over for leisure. These were activities that were both useful and enjoyable. The usefulness of the finished project of the *Libro de la caza*, for example, is found in its educating function targeting a male readership.¹⁴¹ Juan Manuel did not keep his knowledge, passion and expertise pertaining to falconry to himself, but instead he passed them on, by dictating them to a scribe who wrote his dictations down in a book that could be copied and distributed among the men in the present and in the future who were interested in the subject of falconry.¹⁴²

The pleasure that Juan Manuel derived from hunting was in part due to the companionship he found with other men who participated in the sport with him, men who told stories about hunting to each other, men who he could jostle with and play pranks on. In the last chapter of the *Libro de la caza*, Juan Manuel describes the pleasure that he derives by leading his fellow companions through the terrain into traps in which they fell and then by laughing at them.¹⁴³ Stories,

¹⁴⁰ *Obras completas* I (see note 1), 91: 42–44.

¹⁴¹ The books that followed have the same purpose that the *Libro de la caza* has, to educate the aristocratic male. The *Libro del cauallero et del escudero* (*The Book of the Knight and the Squire*) is an education on the way to live the life of a Catholic knight. The *Libro de los estados* (*Book of Estates*) educates on the Catholic faith in lay terms and explains the organization of the two branches of society, lay and clerical. The book combines two genres, the genre of the Estates and the genre of the Mirror of Princes. The *Libro enfenido* also belongs to a distinct genre for aristocratic male readership, the genre of lessons and instructions for sons who inherit wealth and position. Juan Manuel wrote the book for his son Fernando. The *Libro de las armas* is a heraldic treatise that narrates the divine origins of the Manuel lineage whose future it is to inherit the Castilian throne. Even the collection of stories, the *Conde Lucanor*, written between the *Libro de los estados* and the *Libro Infinito*, targets predominantly a male aristocratic readership, no matter how much the author protests that the book has universal appeal.

¹⁴² See Denis Menjot, "Juan Manuel: auteur cynégétique" (see note 21, 213). According to Menjot, Juan Manuel's book was not widely distributed after his death and was eclipsed by the popularity of Pedro de Ayala's book, *El libro de la caza de aves*, written in 1385–1386: "Toutefois et bien dans les inventaires de bibliothèques nobiliaires ne figurent jamais le nom des auteurs, Juan Manuel ne semble pas avoir connu beaucoup de succès comme auteur cynégétique (32), injustement éclipsé en Castille par Pero de Ayala dont on connaît près de vingt manuscrits du traité entre le XIV^e et le XVIII^e siècle (33)." ["Even though the inventories of the libraries of the nobilities don't always include the names of authors, it seems that Juan Manuel was not very successful as a cynegetic writer, for he was unjustly eclipsed in Castilla by Pedro López de Ayala, of whose treatise there were close to twenty manuscripts between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries."]

¹⁴³ "Et avn dize que sienpre ovo el por costumbre de engannar muy de grado a los [que] andan con

with *chufas* or not, and pranks were an important part of the education experience among men, young and old, noble and not, and even dead or alive (for there is always a memory to conjure up of those who have died), who participated in the sport of falconry in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Castilla.

el a caça por les fazer entrar en tales lugares que cayan o lleg[u]en a tal lugar que se ayan a reyr dellos, et quando por otra manera non los podia engannar, que yba apriesa al logar do el dizia que solia que era el paso, et fazia les creer que queria entrar et que los que venian con el que se metian delante et cayan o afondauan, en guisa que avian todos razon de reyr. Et dize que esto tiene el por vno de los plazerres de la caca, pero que esto guarda sienpre de fazer en lugar do el omne nin la vestia non tome danno nin peligro, et dize quell pesa mucho quando se guardan deste su enganno los quell saben esta manera" (*Obras completas* I [see note 1], 591: 440–51).

["And he even says that it has been his custom to play pranks on those who accompany him on hunting excursions by making them fall into tricky places or almost fall, so that they could all laugh at their expense. And when he was not able to trick his companions that easily, because they were suspicious, he would get ahead of them telling them he was heading to the spot that he was familiar with, and then he would make them believe that he was going in, and they would come behind him, pass him, and fall on their face on the ground or fall in the water, which made everybody break out laughing. And he says that he believes that this is one of the pleasures in hunting, but he is always careful not to allow man or beast to get hurt or to fall in any danger, and he sure does not like it when his companions are too guarded and on the defensive, because they know that he is scheming a prank."]

Chapter 14

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Hunting as Salvation in Gaston Phébus's *Livre de la chasse* (1387–1389)

In the beginning, human beings were commanded to have dominion over (*praeesse, subicere*)¹ all of the creatures on the earth (Gen. 1:26, 28). This command to subdue the earth seems to have been the first divine order that humans ever received, predating even the injunction to avoid the forbidden fruit; we might thus reasonably conclude that man's first duty is to be lord of the animals. After the Fall, dominion over the natural world was the only thing that connected humans with their time in Paradise. I will argue in this paper that the medievals ritually invoked, and thereby temporarily reclaimed, the prelapsarian world by subduing wild animals that symbolized the original serpent. The best-known medieval hunting manual, the *Livre de la chasse* (1387–1389) of Gaston Phébus, Count of Foix,² is accordingly a work not only of cynegetical but also spiritual didacticism.

Although there is no record of the first interactions between humans and animals in the Garden of Eden, the relationship was apparently a benign but distant one. Adam and Eve seem to have done little by way of exercising their natural rights over the other living creatures. According to one version of the creation story (Gen. 2:18–19), God originally made the animals as companions for Adam, but they apparently did not fulfill their intended function; there is indeed no evidence that humans received any affection or psychological comfort from

¹ The Latin is taken from *The Vulgate Bible*, vol. 1: *The Pentateuch, Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

² *Livre de chasse*, ed. Gunnar Tilander. *Cynegetica*, XVIII (Karlshamn: E. G. Johanssons Boktryckeri, 1971). [Editor's note: In order to be conform and consistent with all other citations of this work, I have added the article 'la.]

them. At the same time that he created wild beasts, God also created livestock, a special category of animals that are uniquely tailored to serve human needs; this is a curious inclusion, since Adam and Eve do not seem to have made practical use of any creatures, domesticated or wild. They did not eat their charges, for God had commanded that the trees would be their food (Gen. 1:29 and 2:16), and they obviously did not make clothing out of them, either; nor do they seem to have sacrificed them, as later generations would do. As there was no agriculture and no place to go in the prelapsarian world, there also seems to have been no reason for humans to use animals for physical labor or transportation. It is not even clear that they provided Adam and Eve with any sort of aesthetic pleasure. Although the word “dominion” has sometimes been interpreted to mean “stewardship,” there is no evidence that human beings cared for their animal charges in any way. In the beginning, therefore, the animals seem to have served no function at all except to form the bottom rung of a very clear hierarchy of being.³

It was, therefore, a serious shock to the carefully-ordered primeval world when the serpent, somehow more crafty (*callidior*) than all other animals, managed to convince Eve to disobey God. The serpent’s motivation for such gross insubordination is opaque, and its words are not even particularly eloquent. It merely tells Eve the truth about the nature of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and reveals the reason why God had forbidden humans to eat it.⁴ It is not clear how the serpent managed to master the language of God and humans, or why Eve did not show any surprise at hearing an animal speak.

Once the humans and the serpent (and, it would seem, the rest of the beasts) were ejected from Eden, there was no further insubordination from the animals’ side.⁵ Abel had offered his finest lambs to God (Gen. 4:4), but it was not until after

³ St. Thomas Aquinas makes many of these same observations, but concludes that animals must nevertheless have served some purpose for the first humans:

In the state of innocence men would not have needed animals to supply their bodily wants; either for clothing, because they were naked and not ashamed, being beset by no movement of irregular desire; or for food, because they used to feed on the trees of Paradise; or for transport, because they were too robust for that. But what they needed them for was to acquire an experiential knowledge of their natures. This is suggested by God leading the animals to Adam for him to give them their names, which designate their natures.

(*Summa Theologiae*, v. 13 (Cambridge: Blackfriars, and New York: McGraw-Hill, and London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964), 1a, 96, 1, p. 127).

⁴ God, fearing that humans would become godlike, had told Adam and Eve that they would die if they were to eat the fruit. The serpent, on the other hand, assured Eve that they would *not* die. Indeed, eating the fruit did not cause death, though it did ultimately lead to a loss of immortality. Thus the serpent seems to have been at least as honest (arguably more so), and as knowledgeable, as God himself.

⁵ In contrast, Milton imagined that, at the Fall, nature became hostile to man, and to itself. All

the Flood that men began to use animals intensively. God charged Noah and his sons with preserving representative members of each species from destruction, thus firmly establishing that the animals were entirely dependent on the benevolence of their higher-ups. After the waters receded, the animals had to repay the favor. Their first function was as sacrificial victims whose slaughter marked the covenant between God and men. Immediately after disembarking from the ark, Noah's family burn animals on the altar (Gen. 8:20). In response to the sweet smell of charred meat, God promises never to blight the earth on man's account again. He also re-emphasizes the chain of command, a little more savagely this time.

God blessed Noah and his sons; he said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in numbers, and fill the earth. Fear and dread of you will come on all the animals on earth, on all the birds of the air, on everything that moves on the ground, and on all fish in the sea; they are made subject to you. Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; I give them all to you, as I have given you every green plant. (Gen. 9:1–3)⁶

The ideal relationship between humans and animals that is established in Eden is one that, in the postlapsarian world, must be reinforced over and over. Although there is no way to return to the kind of detached, benevolent mastery over the animal kingdom that Adam and Eve enjoyed, it is certainly possible to terrorize the lesser creatures and remind them of who is on top; the symbolism is particularly effective if the animals in question are wild, rather than domestic. According to this logic, hunting is the most perfect gesture of piety, for it is only the hunter who proactively subdues the animals of the earth.⁷

According to the *Livre de la chasse*, the hunter has his work cut out for him. Many wild animals are hostile and none of them comes to hand as easily as Genesis 9

animals, even those we would consider carnivores, were vegetarians until Original Sin radically transformed all of Creation:

Beast now with beast gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving,
Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
Of man but fled him, or with countenance grim
Glared on him passing . . .

(John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, introd. Philip Pullman [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], X.710–14.)

⁶ *The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha*, ed. M. Jack Suggs, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, and James R. Mueller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁷ The activities of subduing the birds of the air or the fish of the sea have long enjoyed a lower status than that of subduing the larger terrestrial mammals. Presumably this is because fish and birds are less dangerous to man, and because fishing and fowling are mainly solitary activities that do not lend themselves well to pageantry. Falconry, an expensive and impractical way to catch birds (it is much more efficient to use nets or lime), is a notable exception to the rule.

would seem to promise. The boar, with its sharp tusks, can split a man in two or kill his horse. The blow of a stag's antlers is like a bolt shot from a crossbow, and it does as much damage. A wild goat can break all the bones in a man's body. Some animals are even venomous: wolves, foxes, badgers, and otters all deliver a poisonous bite. Gaston explains that wolves eat toads and other vermin and thereby absorb their poison; the venom of the other animals is of a more uncertain provenance.

The dog is the most perfect of creatures; its submissiveness and eagerness to serve make it the closest living relative of the prelapsarian animals. However, even it is naturally inclined to evil. The mastiff, a very large and powerful dog, is potentially dangerous and must be particularly well trained, "quar il est mieulz taillé et plus fort pour fere mal que nulle autre beste" (for it is better shaped and more powerful for doing harm (*ferre mal*) than any other beast) (17:6). Mastiffs may attack the livestock that is under their care, and Gaston mentions that he has even known of one that killed its master. Although the word *mal* can imply simple noxiousness, it carries a strong overtone of evil or sinfulness, of willful and conscious malice.⁸ A poorly-trained mastiff is not merely unsafe, but treacherous. Even gentle dogs harbor something diabolical inside of them. Of the *chien courant*, a scent hound, Gaston says:

. . . on les puet bien aidier a fere bons, en bien les enseigner et duire, en les bien chevauchier et acompaigner, en faisant plaisirs et bonnes cuiries quant ilz ont bien fet et en blasmant et batant quant ilz ont mal fet, quar ilz sont bestes, si leur couvient a moustrer ce que on veult qu'ilz facent.

[. . . one can indeed help to make them good, by teaching and training them well, following and accompanying them well on horseback, pleasing them and making good *curées* [the after-hunt rituals in which the dogs are fed on the carcass] when they have done well, and scolding and beating them when they have done badly (*mal*), for they are beasts, so it is necessary to show them what one wants them to do.] (19:5–6)

Mal faire could be construed as "to do poorly," but it may just as easily mean "to do harm, to hurt" or "to do evil, to do something contrary to justice or morality." It is thus unclear whether the dogs that deserve punishment have hunted badly, have done something naughty, or have committed a diabolical deed; perhaps they have done all three. Dogs' tendency to do *mal* (whatever that word might mean) is all the more dangerous because humans live so close to them and rely on them so completely.

⁸ For possible meanings of the construction "faire mal"/"mal faire," see "mal 1 (subst. masc.);" and "mal 3 (adv.);" in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)* (Nancy: ATILF - CNRS, 2010), <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf> (last accessed on Jan. 23, 2012).

If even dogs cannot be entirely trusted, then wild animals are intractably depraved. Bear cubs suckle for a month at most, because

. . . ilz ont males ongles et males denz et sont felonnesses bestes de leur nature. Et, quant ilz ne truevent le let de leur mere a leur guise ou que l'ourse se bouge ou se muet, ilz mordent et esgratinent les poupes de leur mere, et elle se courrouce et les blesce ou tue aucune fois.

[. . . they have nasty (*males*) nails and nasty teeth and they are cruel (*felonnesses*) beasts by nature. And, when they do not find their mother's milk to their liking or the she-bear changes place or moves, they bite and scratch the teats of their mother, and she grows angry and wounds or kills them sometimes.] (8:13–15)

The bear's teeth and claws are not merely defenses against attack, or tools for obtaining and eating an omnivorous diet; rather, they are physical manifestations of the animal's inherently evil nature. The word *felonnesse* has overtones of treachery and moral depravity.⁹ Although the bear is almost human in some ways—it stands upright and mates face-to-face¹⁰—it is nevertheless an unnatural creature.

The bear may be depraved, but is clumsy and foolish, and therefore not a serious threat. However, there are many other animals that seem to have the sort of intelligence that made the original serpent so dangerous: namely, a combination of craftiness and an intimate knowledge of both the natural environment and of human behavior. Gaston calls such animals as the roe deer, the hare, the wolf, and the fox *malicieux*, *faux*, and *subtil*. The tricks used by such animals to capture their prey or avoid capture themselves are *malices*, *ruses*, or *subtilités*.

The stag is one of the most devious animals, and it very often avoids capture through impressive evasive action:

. . . il a plus de saigesses et de malices en garentir sa vie que nulle autre beste ne homme, quar il n'i a nul si bon veneur ou monde qui peüst penser les malices et subtilitez que un cerf scet fere, ne n'est nul si bon veneur ne si bons chienz qui moult de foiz ne faillent bien a prendre le cerf a force, et ce est par son sen et par sa malice et par sa subtilité.

[. . . it has more wisdom (*saigesses*) and tricks (*malices*) to save its life than any other beast or man, for there is no hunter so good in the world who could think of the tricks (*malices*) and stratagems (*subtilitez*) that a stag knows how to do, nor is there a hunter so good or dogs so good who indeed have not many times failed to take the stag by force, and this is because of its good sense and because of its trickiness and its wiliness (*subilité*).] (1:87–88)

⁹ "Felonnesse (adj. fém.)," *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (1330–1500) (see note 8).

¹⁰ Or so Gaston says, at any rate. In fact, bears mate in the usual way: front to back.

The word *malice* can be used to describe the perversion, nastiness, and deceptiveness of all sorts of beings, from animals to women to Lucifer himself.¹¹ *Subtilité* suggests not merely ingeniousness, but dishonesty and deceit.¹² At the same time, Gaston clearly feels great admiration for his foe, as he describes the same morally questionable maneuvers as *saigesses* and applauds the animal for having *sen*;¹³ both words refer to the kind of intellectual and moral discernment only possessed by superior beings, whether human or divine. In other words, this morally ambiguous animal embodies aspects of God, man, and Satan, very much like the original serpent itself.¹⁴

In fact, it is the superior faculties of the stag, combined with its physical power and speed, that are precisely what make its hunt the sport of kings, “la plus noble chasce que l’en puisse chascier” (the most noble chase that one could pursue) (1:53). The hunt of a clever animal is an atavistic, ritual return to the original encounter with the wily serpent; the key difference is that this time, man will almost certainly triumph over his rival. In this postlapsarian drama, the more of the serpent’s craftiness that an animal displays, and the more strength and endurance that it has, the more worthy it is of being subdued, and, we might assume, the more divine favor a hunter will receive for subduing it. Interestingly, malice and nobility are linked, at least in the animal kingdom.

In this world of lurking postlapsarian evil, hunters must match their opponents’ cunning, without ever crossing the line into moral depravity. Humans and their dogs use *subtilités* against wild animals, just as *subtilités* are used against them. They also have the option to use *engins* or *harnois*: nets, snares, and the like. All of these words have martial connotations, further underscoring the fact that hunting is a war waged against the animal kingdom. However, Gaston claims that he is reluctant to talk about hunts that rely excessively on deception or artificial contraptions, and which practically guarantee a kill, because

. . . je ne devroye enseigner a prendre les bestes si n’est par noblesce et gentillesce et par avoir biaux deduiz, affin qu’il y eüst plus de bestes et qu’on ne les tuast pas fausement mes en trovast on touz jours assez a chascier . . .

¹¹ “Malice (subst. fém. et masc.),” *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)* (see note 8).

¹² “Subtilité (subst. fém.),” *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)* (see note 8).

¹³ Many animals are *saige* and *sachant*, or possessed of *sen*, but only humans, dogs, and wolves have *connaissance*, and only dogs and humans have *jugement*. It is unclear how, or whether, Gaston differentiates between the different words that he uses to describe intelligence and understanding.

¹⁴ According to folk wisdom that Gaston refuses to corroborate, the stag gains its immortality from snake venom. When the stag nears the end of its life, it harasses a serpent and then swallows it, drinks water, and runs here and there until its bad humors are cast out and its flesh is renewed (1:82–83).

[. . . I should not wish to teach [one] to take beasts if not with nobility and gentility and by having beautiful delights, for there would be more beasts if one did not kill them falsely but one would always find enough of them to hunt . . .] (60:4–5)

Hunts that use such base techniques are fit only for *vilains* (61:11, 63:9), humans who are nearly beasts themselves. There is a fine line between beating the animals at their own game and stooping to their level of moral corruption.

Ultimately, the noble and gentle hunter does not rely on elaborate devices or stratagems, but, like the knight, confronts his foes openly and honestly. He hunts any animal that can run fast and far *a force*: that is, on horseback, accompanied by packs of dogs led by unmounted underhunters. He carries a sword and a dagger and may use a spear, but generally eschews weapons that allow him to avoid physical danger, at least until the final confrontation with the quarry, when such weapons may become necessary.

The defining characteristic of the true hunter is *maîtrise*, mastery. *Maîtrise* implies not merely technical knowledge, but power and dominance; the hunter does not simply wish to win the contest against his quarry, but to demonstrate his essential superiority over the animal kingdom. Both humans and animals can be “masters” of their respective professions. The *maître du ruit* or *maître des biches* (1:13–14) is the stag that wins the right to mate with the females in the herd; these contests are often fought to the death. The boar is also the master of its own domain: in order to challenge it to a final showdown, the hunter calls, “Avant, maître! Avant! Or sa, sa!” (Advance, master! Advance! Now here, here!) (53:22). Gaston boasts that, when it comes to venery, no one is possessed of more *maîtrise* than himself: “je ne doute que j’aye nul maître” (I doubt that I have any master) (Prologue:6).

The *maître de la chasce* or the *maître veneur*, like a field marshal, leads the armies of underhunters and dogs in pursuit of the quarry. The longer an animal can evade its pursuers, the more *maîtrise* it takes to catch it: it requires great mastery to take the fleet-footed, malicious roe deer, but very little to take the lumbering, unimaginative badger or the wildcat, whose one trick is to climb up the nearest tree. In general, the more evenly a hunt pits men against wild beasts (keeping in mind that the medieval aristocratic hunt was never intended to be a fair contest) and the more malicious and noble the foe, the more *maîtrise* the hunt requires, and the greater its symbolic weight. As for the Pyrenean mountain goat, a dangerous but ignoble animal, Gaston says, with evident distaste, “chascun paisant y est bon veneur de cela, quar il n’i a pas trop grant maîtrise a les prendre” (each peasant there is a good hunter of it, for there is not too much mastery in taking them) (4:51–52).

A certain amount of animal malice gives the hunter an opportunity to demonstrate his own *maîtrise*. If it has too much natural maliciousness, however, an animal ceases to be a source of beautiful sport and becomes a menace. If there

is one animal that embodies the craftiness and insubordination of the serpent, it is the wolf: "Merveilleusement est sachant beste et fausse, plus que nulle beste, en garder touz ses avantages . . ." (It is a marvelously clever (*sachant*) and false beast, more so than any other beast, in keeping all of its advantages . . .) (10:51). Wolves look and act like dogs, and they furthermore display behaviors that are nearly human: they have strong attachments to their companions, are monogamously pair-bonded, show intense maternal and filial devotion, and seem to practice a sort of courtly love.

Yet for all that, there is no sympathy between wolves and men. Like a serpent that can speak a human language, the wolf's nearly human behavior makes it more, not less, threatening.¹⁵ Wolves' knowledge of men is so complete that they can stalk and kill a traveler without ever being seen (10:43–44). Some wolves learn that humans are easier to catch than other animals, or they become accustomed to feeding on the dead bodies left behind by war or public executions, and thereby become man-eaters. However, the only people who seem to be in real danger of being eaten by wolves are lone travelers, peasant children, and shepherds (10:40–50). Gaston does not mention that he has ever seen anyone injured during a wolf hunt.

The wolf's real crime seems to be not that it is dangerous but that it refuses to accept man as its master:

On ne peut nourrir un loup, pour quant que on l'ait petit ne joesne et l'en le chastie et bate et tieigne en discipline, que tousjours il ne face mal, s'il a loisir et le peut faire, et jamaiz, pour quant qu'il soit privé, ne sera, se on le maine dehors, qu'il ne regarde tousjours et de ça et de la pour veoir s'il peut en nul lieu faire mal ou il regarde, car il a doubte que on ne li face mal, car il scet bien en sa cognoissance qu'il fait mal. Et pour ce le crie l'en, chasce et tue, maiz pour tout cela ne puet il laisser sa mauvaise nature.

[One cannot raise a wolf, even if one has it when it is small or young and punishes and beats and disciplines it, for it always does mischief (*faire mal*), if it has the opportunity and can do it. And never, no matter how tame it is, if one leads it outside, will it miss a chance to look here and there in order to see if it can do mischief in any place where it looks, for it fears that someone should do it mischief; for it knows well in its faculties of understanding (*cognoissance*) that it does mischief. And because of this they call after it, chase it, and kill it, but for all that it cannot leave its bad nature.] (10:74–76)

¹⁵ The behavior of wolves seems to be a mockery of, or perhaps even a pointed commentary on, human institutions. In lupine "courtly love," the she-wolf leads on the males until they are exhausted, then chooses the weakest and most miserable suitor because he is the one who has suffered most for her love; he is often subsequently killed by his angry rivals. Wolf "marriages" are based on mutual mistrust and deception, at least when there are pups: both parents try to deceive each other in order to take the greater share of the food.

The wolf is evil incarnate: if it is not currently doing wrong, it is waiting for its next opportunity to do it. Even when it is given the sort of discipline that is effective with other, more tractable creatures also prone to bad behavior, such as dogs and boys, the wolf does not improve by correction. Like the serpent, it has the intelligence to know that it is wrong to subvert the wishes of its natural master, but, like the sociopath, it cannot seem to help itself. The wolf has an overabundance of the malice that would ordinarily render its pursuit immensely pleasurable. Yet the hunt of the wolf has no beauty and no nobility; it is merely a practical necessity. In the wolf hunt *a force*, the wolf is baited and ambushed, precisely the kind of low trickery that Gaston usually abhors. He also describes many other ways that the wolf can be killed: it can be snared, lured into pitfalls or jaw-traps, or tricked into swallowing meat that hides spring-loaded needles so that it dies horribly, days later, from a perforated intestine. In addition, it is sometimes trapped and kept alive, to be later used in brutal dog-training exercises. This deliberate circumvention of the usual rules of aristocratic hunting is striking. These cruel practices seem to be designed to punish the wolf not for what it has done or might do in the future, but for its inherent wolfishness.

At first glance, the *Livre de la chasse* seems to warn us that the postlapsarian world is a hostile place. If humans do not regularly exercise mastery over the beasts, they will themselves be mastered. However, a closer look at the text suggests that the natural world is not quite so harsh and predatory as it first seems. Critically, the evil does not seem to be infectious: unlike the first humans, medieval huntsmen are not in peril of being morally corrupted by the animals that confront them. The only danger is physical, and it is only when an animal's naturally bad character is coupled with treacherous weaponry that the hunter is imperiled. Even then, injury seems to be avoidable if one takes reasonable precautions. Two men, working carefully and in tandem, can defeat a bear without risk of injury (8:34–36). A man can be killed by a boar, but only if he is a reckless fool (54:14–16).

So long as the huntsman has sufficient *maîtrise* and the dogs have been trained well, the hunt will probably be successful. The stag is clever enough to evade its pursuers quite often; even King Philip and the Count of Alanson, consummate masters of the chase who owned dogs superior to any dog alive today, could be fooled by the wiles of this animal (45:156–57). Nevertheless, Gaston seems to suggest, even the most malicious stag can only win the contest temporarily. If the dogs lose the trail, the huntsman need only take a break, have a glass of wine, throw some bread to the pack, and they will soon be able to pick up the scent again, as if by magic (45:133–36). When night falls, he can pack up and go home, secure in the knowledge that he need only return to the same spot the next morning in order to resume the chase.

Et, s'ilz le drescent, si chasce après jusques a tant qu'il soit nuyt. Et, quant il sera nuyt, il doit reprendre ses chienz et demorer au plus pres qu'il pourra d'ilec et y fere ses brisiees. Et l'endemain, des qu'il sera cler jour, il doit retourner a ses brisiees et requierir son cerf . . .

[And, if they [the dogs] rouse it, then chase after it until it is night. And, when it is night, he [the huntsman] must take his dogs again and remain as close as he can to that place and make his *brisées* [broken branches indicating where the deer is harbored]. And the next day, as soon as it is light, he must return to his *brisées* and look again for his stag . . .] (45:136–38)

The animal will still be there, Gaston assures the reader, as if the hunt were bookmarked at that place and time. In the chapter on the natural history of the stag, Gaston warns that cornered animals are extremely dangerous; as the saying goes, “Après le sangler le mire, et après le cerf la bierre” (After the boar, the doctor, and after the stag, the bier) (1:7–8). He has many times seen these powerful beasts kill dogs, horses, and men. But in the chapter describing the hunt *a force* of the stag, there is no mention of gruesome hunting accidents, merely a warning to be careful of the dogs when shooting the animal from a distance, or hamstringing it from behind. The text seems to suggest that, so long as one acts with prudence, there is no chance that the quarry will escape death or injure its pursuers, no misstep that cannot be rectified or any malice that cannot be defeated with mastery.

The illustrations of the earliest extant manuscript of the *Livre de la chasse* only serve to reinforce the notion that wild animals, nefarious as they may be, can be subdued by a skillful hunter with little difficulty. Bibliothèque Nationale ms fr. 619 seems to have been copied from Gaston's original text during his lifetime.¹⁶ Its grisaille illustrations, all executed by the same hand, were likely drawn under Gaston's watchful eye.¹⁷

In contrast to the often harsh conditions under which the hunter must work, the physical environment depicted in the illustrations is benign, even domesticated. There is no bad weather, no perceptible change in seasons, no dawn, dusk, or night. The sky is blank, uniformly illuminated, with no objects off in the distance or in the sky, so that each scene seems to take place against a white wall. In the forest, the ground is almost always decorated with tufts of grass so precisely arranged that they resemble a checkered floor. Depending on the other elements of the illustration, the trees may be either evenly scattered in the foreground or

¹⁶ François Avril, Aleksandra Sarrabezolles, and Jean-Paul Saint-Aubin, *Le livre de chasse de Gaston Phébus* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Montparnasse Multimedia, 1999), CD-ROM.

¹⁷ Carl Nordenfalk, “Hatred, Hunting, and Love: Three Themes Relative to Some Manuscripts of Jean sans Peur,” *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, ed. Irving Lavin and John Plummer, vol. 1 (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 324–41; here 333–34.

neatly lined up along the back of these picture-dioramas; in any case, their function is decorative and they almost never obscure any part of the view. Although the trees have realistic-looking leaves, they resemble nothing that is found naturally in a European forest; their odd, umbel-like forms seem to have been created through careful pruning or pollarding. In fact, the vines that frame the illustrations are more lifelike than the vegetation pictured within the illustrations themselves.

The other types of landscapes are equally tame. Hares forage in agricultural fields adorned with neatly-combed rows of grain or run around flat, treeless meadows; otters swim in shallow, straight canals, within easy reach of the hunters' tridents. The dreadful cliffs of the Pyrenees have been transformed into what seem to be low, molded slices of pâté, like an elaborate *entremets*. The illustrations cage the animals into two-dimensional, deliberately artificial landscapes, as if they were inmates of a very old-fashioned zoo.

The artist does not attempt to create any illusion of depth or distance, so that it is impossible to forget that one is looking at a two-dimensional surface. No matter where they are on the picture plane, the animals always seem to be the same distance away from the viewer, as if they were sandwiched between vertical plates of glass. They are oddly two-dimensional and boneless; in particular, the boars and bears seem to be only a few inches thick and are easily run through by spears (84v, 97r). Animals are almost always depicted in profile or in three-quarters view, neither facing toward the "fourth wall" that divides us from them, nor facing away; in other words, they are perpetual subjects, incapable either of confronting us or of avoiding our gazes. They are as helpless and exposed on the page as Gaston assures us that they will be on the hunting field.

Furthermore, the artist sometimes depicts multiple perspectives at once, a technique that only reinforces how unnatural these scenes really are. Several man-made structures float dizzily in mid-air, superimposed on the landscape: wicker hedges that direct animals to a pitfall (95r), a circular wolf trap (98v), a crossroads (Fig. 1: 109r). When the animals disappear into dens or holes in the ground or the foliage, it looks as if they are simply slipping through defects in the parchment (e. g. 15r, 92v, 100r). Dogs chase hares within an Escheresque, perfectly flat vineyard, which is bordered by a thick hedge, also perfectly flat, that resembles both a picture frame and a Möbius strip. The gaps in the hedge appear to lead not to the field beyond but straight down, into the depths of the book itself (Fig. 2: 111r). Thus the natural world becomes as flat, smooth, and predictable as the page; the only way that an animal can escape is by tunneling through the folio like a bookworm.

Each of the chapters devoted to describing the natures of the chaseable beasts (ch. 1–14) is prefaced by an illustration of a group of animals that feed, mate, suckle their young, play, hunt, run, and stand around in picturesque attitudes.

They are depicted more or less realistically, though the bear is so similar to the boar and even to the badger that one wonders whether the artist could have drawn his pictures from life. He is less interested in strict realism, however, than he is in portraying the essential maliciousness of those species that are most opposed to man. The irritable bear seems to spend most of its time in angry wrestling matches with others of its kind and manages to look belligerent even when staring thoughtfully into the distance (15v). The boar is a prolific breeder as well as a bad-tempered animal, and so the illustration of its chapter prominently features two wild pigs mating aggressively (17v). The illustrations of animals whose diets and behaviors put them into close contact with humans suggest that they do little else except use their execrable malice to thwart human industry. The fox, wildcat, and otter are troublesome because they take small animals that humans also like to eat. Unsurprisingly, however, the worst offender is the wolf, which seems to do very little else apart from steal livestock and make more little wolves that will, in time, steal yet more livestock (Fig. 3: 19v).¹⁸

These illustrations of animals attractively and variously posed against decorative backgrounds could have come from an artist's pattern book. There is certainly some indication that the illustrator was inspired by books other than the one he was decorating. The image of the wildcat, in particular, seems to have been borrowed wholesale from a manual of heraldry. Of this animal, Gaston writes:

... y a il de diverses manieres de chaz sauvaiges, espiciaument il en y a uns qui sont granz comme lieparz, et ceuls apelent aucuns loups cerviers et les autres chaz lous. Et c'est mau dit, quar ils ne sont ne lous serviers ni chatz lous. On les pourroit mieulz apeler chaz lieparz que autrement, quar ilz traient plus a liepart que a autre beste . . . ilz son eini granz que un lou et ont auques la fourme d'un liepart, mais qu'ilz n'ont pas si longue cueue.

[... there are different kinds of wildcats; in particular, there are some that are large like leopards, and some people call them "lynxes" and others call them "wolf-cats." And this is badly said, for they are neither lynxes nor wolf-cats. One could better call them "leopard cats" than anything else, for they resemble the leopard more than any other beast. . . . they are thus as large as a wolf and have about the same shape as a leopard, but they do not have such a long tail.] (13:3–6, 7–8)

This is a rather confused description, but it seems probable that Gaston is describing the European lynx, a medium-sized, stocky animal with large, tufted

¹⁸ On the other hand, badgers, which are neither clever nor fast, neither particularly helpful nor particularly noxious to humans, and which do not even taste very good, wander aimlessly around the enclosure of their picture, doing nothing at all (23v). If an animal does not do something either directly for or against human beings, the artist apparently cannot imagine what else it could do with its time.

ears and a very short tail, both prominently tipped in black.¹⁹ The artist, perhaps unfamiliar with the lynx and undoubtedly influenced by the word “leopard” in the text, has drawn the latter animal. In one image, a stylized leopard sticks out its tongue (Fig. 4.1: 24r). Another animal is posed in the attitude known as “rampant guardant,” with its front legs outstretched and one hind leg lifted; it even winks one eye at the viewer. It is locked in combat with a dog that appears to be in an almost identical position, so that this corner of the illustration resembles a heraldic device as much as it does a fight to the death (Fig. 4.2: 90v). The wildcat has a reputation for being devilish,²⁰ but these cartoonish animals seem to be nothing more than mischievous, even a little silly.

All hunts *a force* are illustrated in the same way: the aristocratic hunters ride at the top left corner of the field; the servants and dogs run from the lower left corner to the upper right corner, where the quarry flees up a slight incline (Fig. 5: 57r, 62r, 79r, 82v). The hunters always seem to be mere seconds away from subduing their prey. We can read the pictures as we would read words across the page, from left to right and from top to bottom. They reveal the natural hierarchy that hunting helps to reinforce: aristocrats on top, dogs and non-aristocrats beneath them. They furthermore suggest that the narrative of the hunt can only lead to a single conclusion, one that is very favorable to the hunters and very unfavorable to the quarry. The illustrations are so similar that they become reassuringly predictable, even monotonous.²¹

Although the text describes the many ways that wild animals can evade or attack hunters and their dogs, the animals in the illustrations generally seem

¹⁹ The illustration fronting this chapter depicts two sorts of animals, one of which is larger and spotted and other of which is smaller and striped; these are probably the lynx and the European wildcat, respectively. Gaston tends to group together related species if he does not esteem their hunts highly. For example, he mentions two species of mountain goats in the same breath: “Des boucs y a de deux manieres, les uns s’apellent boucs sauvaiges et les autres boucs ysarus, et aucuns les apellent sarus” (There are two kinds of goats; some are called wild goats and the other “ysaru goats,” and some call them “sarus”) (4:3–4). These two animals seem to be the Pyrenean ibex (now extinct) and the Pyrenean chamois, respectively. On the other hand, Gaston separates the rabbit from the hare and the three kinds of deer from each other, for each provides a distinctly different sort of chase.

²⁰ Edward of Norwich, who translated the *Livre de la chasse* into English, adds his own observation to the chapter on wildcats: “Of common wild cats I need not to speak much, for every hunter in England knoweth them, and their falseness and malice are well known. But one thing I dare well say that if any beast hath the devil’s spirit in him, without doubt it is the cat, both the wild and the tame.” *The Master of Game*, ed. William A. and F. N. Baillie-Grohman (1909; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 71.

²¹ In contrast to the stylized, almost serene depictions of the *chasses a force*, the hunts of the wild goat, rabbit, badger, and otter are chaotic and ruthless. The terrified animals are shot, speared, netted, and ripped apart by dogs in every corner of each picture. Ignoble animals do not deserve noble deaths.

blandly resigned to their fates. If they notice their pursuers at all – and sometimes they seem to take no notice whatsoever – the only expressions they evince are those of curiosity, confusion, surprise, mild irritation, and, perhaps, reproach. Only the boars turn to face their attackers with the intent to do harm, and some animals even run toward their pursuers, rather than away from them (101v). Like the beasts before the Fall, most of these animals seem to recognize man as their master.

Ultimately, the malicious animals of the *Livre de la chasse* are less malicious than they at first appear. Unlike the original serpent, these beasts can be defeated time and time again in a sort of symbolic return to Eden. The hunt is an act of both devotion and nostalgia. It is a ritual invocation of the prelapsarian world, an acknowledgment of God's plan, even a form of prayer. Yet mastering the animals, it turns out, is the easy part; it is far more difficult to master oneself. In the Prologue, Gaston explains that imagination orchestrates every man's deeds, for

. . . les ymaginations de l'omme vont plus tost a mal que a bien par les troys enemis qu'il ha, c'est le deable, le monde et la char Ore te prouveray comment ymagination est seigneur et maistre de toutes euvres bonnes ou mauvaises que l'en fet et de tout le corps et membres de l'omme. Tu sces bien que onques euvre bonne ou mauvaise, soit petite ou grande, ne se fist que premier ne fust ymaginee et pensee. Donc est elle maistresse, quar, selon ce que l'ymagination commande, l'en fet l'euvre bonne ou mauvaise, quele que soit, comme j'ay dit.

[. . . the imaginings of man go sooner to evil than good because of the three enemies that he has: namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh Now I will prove to you how imagination is lord and master of all good or bad deeds that one does and of all the body and limbs of man. You know indeed that any good or bad deed, whether small or large, is never done unless it is first imagined and thought about. Thus it is mistress, for, according to what the imagination commands, one does a deed that is good or bad, whatever it might be, as I said.] (Prologue:17–18, 19–21)

Imagination is a dangerous puppet master as well as a shapeshifter: it is now good and now evil, now master and now mistress. It is the seductive devil that we all carry inside of ourselves, and it will lead us to peril unless we subdue it. Predictably, Gaston assures us that the best way to control our imaginations is through hunting that is strenuous enough to exhaust us so that we do not seek out trouble at night, but not so strenuous that we are distracted from our temporal and spiritual duties. The *chasse a force* keeps a man's body and mind healthy and obedient, and, most importantly, "hon en fuit touz les sept pechiez mortelz" (a man flees all the seven deadly sins in this way) (Prologue:13). Gaston seems to imagine the pursuit of salvation as a set of nested and interlocking Wild Hunts:

animals that are proxies for the devil attempt to evade the hunter while the hunter's soul attempts to evade the devil within.²²

At the beginning of the final section of the *Livre de la chasse*, Gaston becomes even more hyperbolic in his claims for the spiritual benefits of the chase, asserting that there is no one in heaven *except* good hunters (60:10–11). It is doubtful that he truly believed in this celestial model, which would ensure that heaven contained only able-bodied aristocratic men, Pyrenean peasants, and poachers of all stripes. There is an underlying desperation to these increasingly emphatic declarations that seems to reflect the author's deep anxieties about his own chances for redemption. Clearly, something weighed heavily on his conscience. In the collection of prayers now known as the *Orisons*, which are included in six of the forty-four extant manuscripts of the *Livre de la chasse*, Gaston refers obliquely to a terrible sin that he has committed. Most scholars have assumed that he alludes to the murder of his only legitimate son, but others have suggested that the sin in question is heterosexual or even homosexual lust.²³ Whatever the nature of his crime, the *Livre de la chasse* seems to be, like the *Orisons*, a petition for the reinstatement of divine favor.

Gaston's confidence and bluff good humor in the Prologue seem to gradually transform into anxious grandiosity, and then finally to depression and remorse. In the Epilogue, Gaston discards his earlier boast that he has no master in the cynegetical arts, and dedicates his book to Philippe de France, "maistre de nous touz qui sommes du mestier de venerie" (master of all of us who belong to the craft of venery) (86:8). Furthermore, he mentions that, along with the manuscript, he sends "unes oroysons qui je fis jadis quant Nostre Seigneur fut courroucié a moy" (a prayer that I made long ago when Our Lord was angry with me) (86:12–13). He seems to fear that God is still angry. In the Prologue, he recognized the unruly but entirely controllable imagination as lord over human destiny; in the Epilogue, he seems to quail before an angry and implacable Lord. Gaston, devout to the end, died while following his own spiritual counsel. Two years after he finished writing the *Livre de la chasse*, he succumbed to a stroke brought on by a

²² Juan Manuel, in his *Libro de la caza* (ca. 1325), also linked hunting and sin, though in a very different manner: he denounced all those who refused to believe the stories of his cynegetical exploits as "sinners." See the contribution to this volume by Maria Cecilia Ruiz.

²³ Richard Vernier, *Lord of the Pyrenees: Gaston Fébus, Count of Foix (1331–1391)* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2008), 147–48. Gaston was well-known for his violent temper, as well as for his insatiable sexual appetite. He claims that he is not the greatest of lovers (Prologue:3–4), a transparent modesty trope that is meant to remind the reader of his *maîtrise* in the art of seduction.

strenuous bear hunt in hot weather.²⁴ Whether or not he won divine favor for his cynegetical achievements, we cannot know.

The *Livre de la chasse* is thus not merely a hunting manual but a guide to salvation, a prayerbook, a gesture of penance, and, in the final analysis, a work of remarkable audacity. At the same time that Gaston cowers before God, he cannot resist proclaiming himself the savior of humanity. He will speak of the ignoble hunts not because he wants to do so but because he is obligated to do so:

... je feroye trop grant pechié si je pouoye fere les genz sauver et aler en paradis et je les fesoye aler en enfer. Et aussi, si je fesoye les genz mourir et je les peüsse fere longuement vivre. Et aussi, si je fesoye les genz estre tristes et mounes et pensis et je les pouoye fere vivre lieement.

[... I would sin very greatly if I could have people saved and go to paradise and I made them go to hell. And also, if I made people die and I could have made them live for a long time. And also if I made people sad and mournful and worried and I could make them live joyously.] (60:6–9)

Gaston depicts himself as an amalgamation of Christ, the Parcae, and Imagination; the false humility with which he tries to hide his megalomania only serves to highlight it. There is a barely-disguised criticism here: God could take such good care of his subjects as Gaston does of his, but he does not.

Gaston is not merely a syncretistic deity; his hunting book is also a rewriting of Genesis, in which he plays almost all of the roles himself. Just as Adam named the animals, so, in the first section of the text, Gaston names and describes the natural history of every one of the chaseable beasts, from stags to otters; in the second section, he names and describes every one of the different types of dogs used in the hunt. His knowledge of the beasts, like Adam's, is impeccable. Gaston is, in addition, a dispenser of classified information much like the serpent was; however, rather than giving advice that will cause human misery, his instructions will lead to joy in this world and the next.

He is, finally, a benevolent god, reigning over the world of the hunt. In fact, he seems to be reminiscent not only of the Father, but of the Son as well: his portrait (Fig. 6: 1r) is clearly modeled on Christ in Majesty. He is seated on a throne, with no halo but his own cropped hair. In one hand, he holds not a book but what is presumably an *estortoire*, the huntsman's all-purpose tool, used to push aside branches as well as chastise disobedient boys and animals. Rather than making a gesture of blessing with his other hand, he mysteriously points at the *estortoire*, as if to remind us who wields the power over our lives. He is surrounded by crowds

²⁴ That, at any rate, was the story that Froissart told. As Richard Vernier notes, it was unlikely that Gaston would be hunting bear in that particular region of Béarn in August (*Lord of the Pyrenees* [see note 23], 187–79).

of rapt and wondering “disciples,” both men and dogs, many of the former with their mouths hanging open in what seems like profound awe. The admirers in the upper row seem to be of a higher caste than those in the lower row; they are depicted as slightly larger, their clothes finer, and their dogs of generally more aristocratic breeds. This hierarchy mirrors Gaston’s unapologetically inegalitarian message of salvation: aristocratic hunters will be installed in the center of heaven and all others will be lodged around the edges (60:11–13).

The only figure missing from this Garden is Eve. Although medieval huntresses were rare, women were intimately connected with the chase: they might be spectators and occasional participants; they typically joined in the before- and after-hunt activities; and they were metaphorically linked with the cynegetical arts through the literary trope of the love-chase. However, the *Livre de la chasse* deliberately avoids almost all mention of human females. The hunter happily spends his time in the company of his male and canine companions, shielded from the pernicious influence of women.

. . . la nuyt il se couchera en son lit et ne pensera que de dormir et de soy lever matin pour fere son office bien et diligement, ainsi que doit fere bon veneour, et n’aura que fere de penser fors de la besoigne qu’il ha, et est occupé, quar il n’est point oyseus, anczois a assez a fere et ymaginer de soy lever matin et de bien fere son office sanz penser a autres pechiez ne mauvestiez.

[. . . at night, he [the hunter] will lay down in his bed and only think of sleeping and of getting up in the morning to do his duty well and diligently, as a good hunter should, and he will have nothing to do except think about what he must do, and he is busy, for he is not at all idle; quite to the contrary, he has enough to do and to imagine himself getting up in the morning and doing his duty well without thinking of other sins or evils.]

(Prologue:23–25)

He lives a monkish existence, his sexual thoughts replaced with (unlikely as it may seem) titillating fantasies about hard work. His life is happy, useful, and spiritually and physically salubrious. If Adam could have done it over again, he might well have taken up hunting.

In the Bible, men were permanently cast out from paradise because of the collaboration of a devilish animal and a foolish woman. In the world of Gaston’s text, however, there is no animal so malicious that it cannot be efficiently subdued by an experienced hunter, and there are no women at all. Gaston is a benevolent deity who wants men to enter paradise, not one who hurries to throw them out for peccadilloes. In Eden, the quest for knowledge was forbidden, but here it is encouraged; Gaston gives his wisdom out freely rather than withholding it. The hunter may not be immortal, but his life is long and idyllic, with the guarantee of a even more pleasant afterlife if he does his work honestly and well. The natural world depicted in the *Livre de la chasse* is not a garden, but neither is it the cursed land of “thorns and thistles” (Gen. 3:18) into which Adam and Eve were thrust. It

is demanding but also beautiful and rewarding, a source of redemption rather than a punishment for sin.

Gaston's book of hunting depicts a world that is somewhere in between Eden and the messy, dangerous postlapsarian world in which we all live, a sort of Valhalla of venery. In this kinder and gentler cosmos, presided over by a merciful and generous god of the chase, time and space work to the advantage of men and hunts are not only perfectly safe (if one takes the correct precautions) but infinitely replicable. Good hunters are guaranteed salvation, and hunting itself is guaranteed to be pleasurable, beneficial, and satisfyingly challenging. The *Livre de la chasse* thus offers its readers exactly those things that Gaston feared he would never have for himself: a peaceful, moderate life, forgiveness of all transgressions, and a final resting place in heaven.

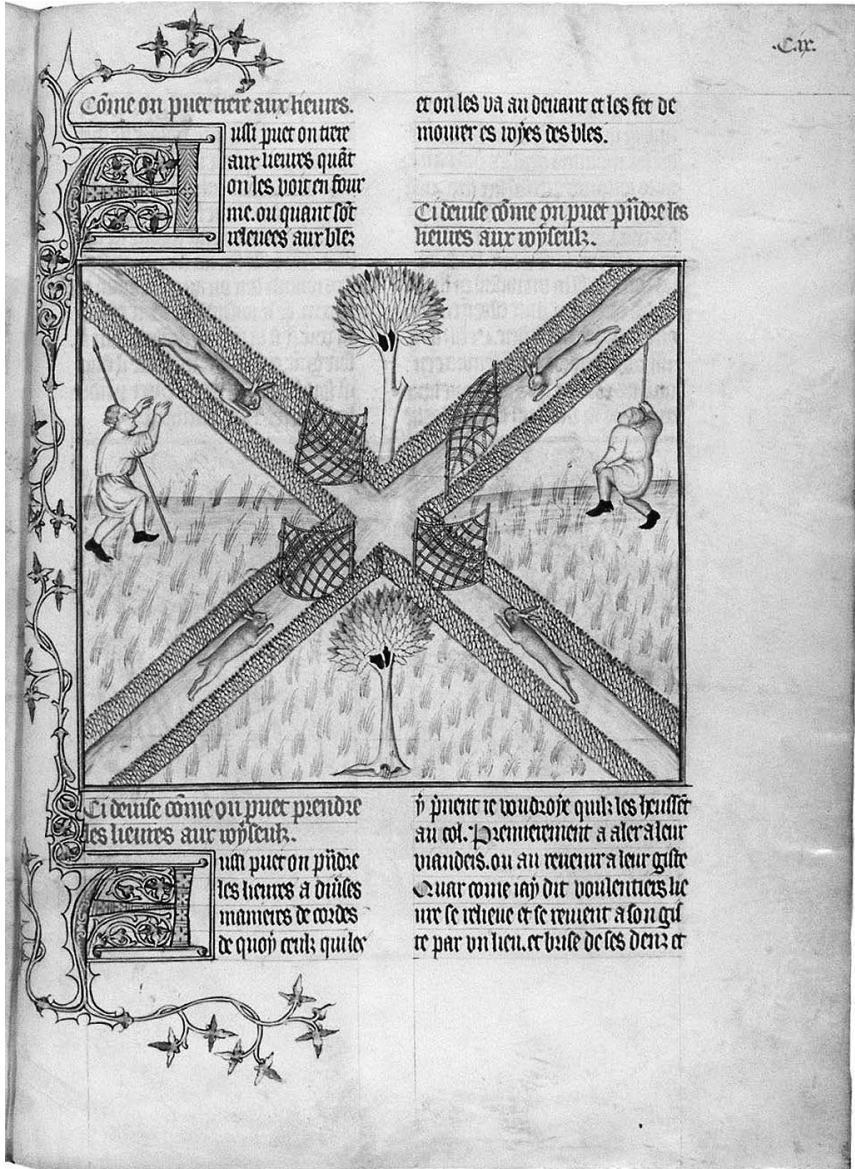


Fig. 1: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français 619, 109r: Hare-hunting at a crossroads. Note that the acanthus-leaf border is more realistic

than are the trees

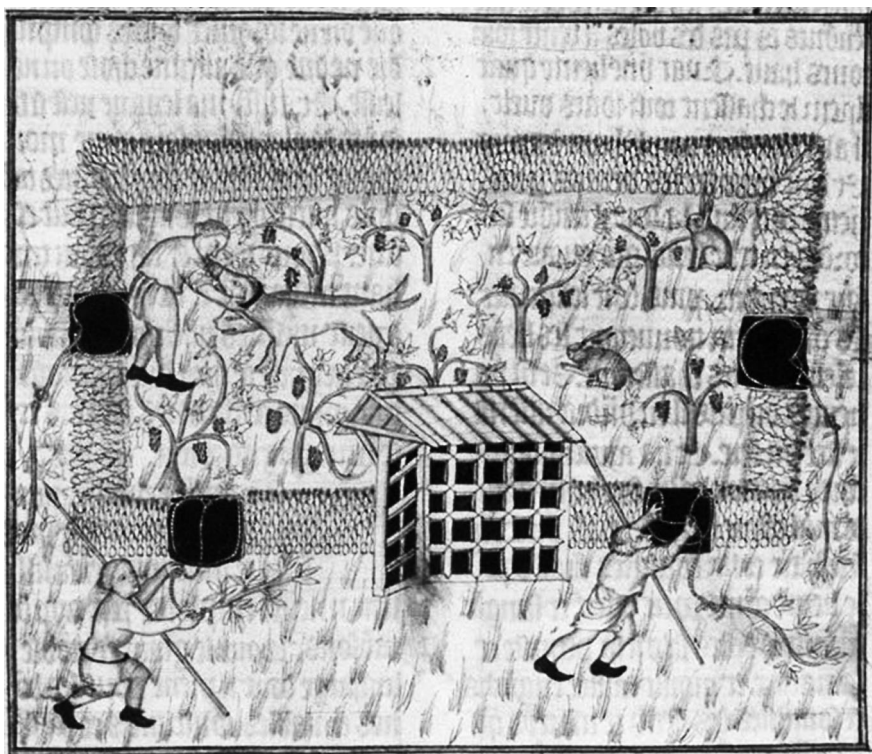


Fig. 2: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français 619, 111r:
Hare-hunting in a vineyard

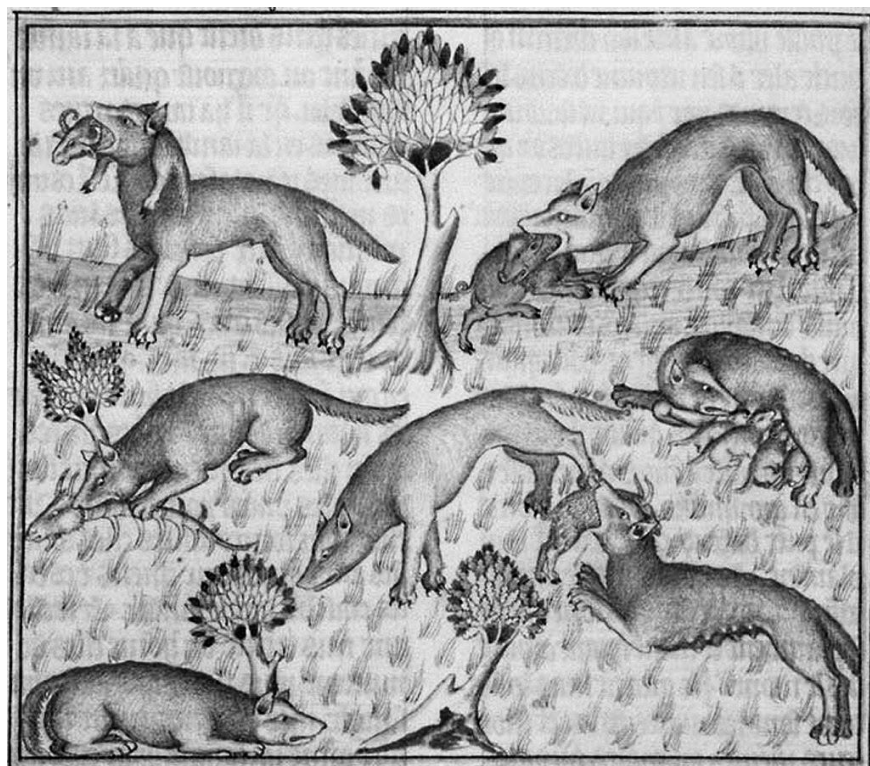


Fig. 3: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français 619, 19v: The malicious wolf



Fig. 4.1 and 4.2: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français
619, 24r and 90v:
two mischievous wildcats

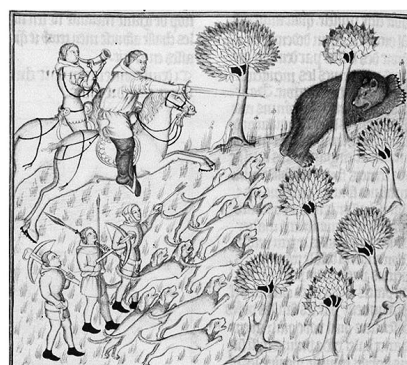
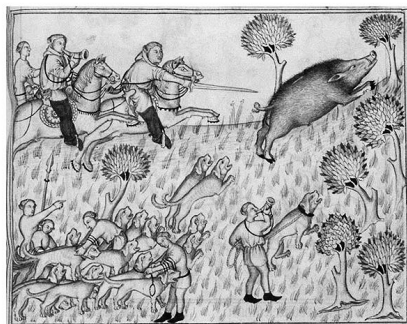
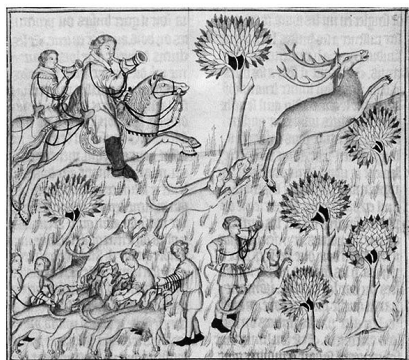


Fig. 5: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français 619, 57r, 62r, 79r, 82v:
Four hunts *a force*



Fig. 6: Bibliothèque Nationale manuscrit français 619, 1r:
Gaston in Majesty

Chapter 15

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Rural Space in Late Medieval *Books of Hours*: Book Illustrations as a Looking-Glass Into Medieval Mentality and Mirrors of Ecocriticism

One of the most delightful and also awe-inspiring representatives of late-medieval art, literature, and religion proves to be the famous genre of *Books of Hours*, a particular kind of manuscript medium for private devotion. These peculiar and highly precious texts, normally relying on the octave format, were mostly produced for well-to-do burghers and aristocrats, and especially for noble ladies who enjoyed the opportunity of having a private setting to pursue their religious needs with the help of these precious little books. The reader is invited, if not encouraged, to carry out an individualized liturgical service, using the *Book of Hours* as the guide and reference point, as the depository of the essential liturgical texts, and as a pictorial medium for personal devotion.¹

A *Book of Hours* typically contained the *Hours of the Virgin*, a calendar for church festivals and individual Saints' Days, excerpts from the four Gospels, penitential psalms and the litany, the Office of the Dead, and related texts, all needed to comply with the basic requirements for a religious life within the Christian context. *Books of Hours* also included prayers, notes for hymns, devotions to particular saints of local extraction, and similar material. Some exemplars were

¹ Wilhelm Hansen, *Kalenderminiaturen der Stundenbücher: Mittelalterliches Leben im Jahreslauf* (Munich: Georg D. W. Callway, 1984). He focuses, above all, on the depiction of the individual seasons of the year, covering a broad spectrum of all aspects and elements contained in the miniatures of the *Book of Hours*, such as the city during winter, life at home, Spring, trees in the month of May, festivities, wedding, church holidays, peasants' work, harvest, baking, milking and churning butter, weaving, pigs, butchery, hunting, grape harvest, wine production, and life in a Flemish city. See also Marie Collins, *Mittelalterliches Leben auf dem Lande: Frühling, Sommer, Herbst und Winter*. Aus dem Englischen von Hans Freundl (1991; Vienna: Tosa, 2003).

obviously intended for use during official mass, allowing the lay owners a limited, yet intense participation in the liturgy during the church service, others were designed to be studied only at home, replicating that liturgy in the private context.

In many respects the *Book of Hours* proves to be analogous to, or rather grew out of, the psalter and then the breviary since the thirteenth century,² but it was destined for the laity, especially the rich and the famous who could afford those often very luxurious books for devotional practice and personal performances.³ Although there is virtually not one *Book of Hours* that looks exactly like any other, they all share the major features, texts, designs, and layout in common.⁴ A comparative analysis would reveal the extent to which the images strikingly resemble each other in their motifs, themes, and essential elements. Nevertheless, both in quantity and artistic quality, the *Book of Hours* can be identified as the most glorious representative of late-medieval book production, often stunningly decorated by first-rate illuminations.⁵

Although artists and scribes closely collaborated in the creation of these wonderful books, making them quickly to very costly, delicate, and precious items in private medieval libraries, thousands have survived, and we could even talk about a best-seller in its own terms. As Elina Gertsman now specifies, "the Books of Hours were lay equivalents to Breviaries, only considerably shortened and considerably more varied."⁶ She also emphasizes: "What set Books of Hours apart

² Claire Donovan, *The de Brailles Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford* (London: British Library, 1991).

³ D. Thoss, "Stundenbuch," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 8.2 (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1996), 259. See also Michael Kwaters, O.S.B., "Book of Hours," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer. Vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), 325–27. See also the quite respectable, if not even more comprehensive article in *Wikipedia* at:

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_hours (last accessed on May 19, 2011).

⁵ See the "Introduction" to *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England*. Selected Texts. Trans. from Latin, Anglo-Norman French and Middle English with Introduction and Interpretive Essay, by Charity Scott-Stokes. Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 1–24; for a very detailed analysis and commentary of one *Book of Hour* from the middle of the fifteenth century, see Friedrich Gorissen, *Das Stundenbuch der Katharina von Kleve: Analyse und Kommentar* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1973); Eberhard König, *Die Bedford Hours: das reichste Stundenbuch des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2007); *Das Stundenbuch der Katharina von Kleve: anlässlich der Ausstellung: Die Welt der Katharina. Frömmigkeit, Dämonen und Alltägliche Leben im 15. Jahrhundert*, Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, 10. Oktober 2009 - 4. Januar 2010; *The Morgan Library & Museum, New York*, 22. Januar - 3. Mai 2010 (Stuttgart: Belser, 2009). Presently, we witness an enormous output of ever new facsimile editions, see, for instance, *Das Flämische Stundenbuch der Maria von Medici: Feinste Buchmalerei in einem Gewand aus Silber, Samt und Seide* (Lucerne: Quaternio Verlag, 2011).

⁶ See, for example, Millard Meiss and Edith W. Kirsch, *The Visconti Hours: National Library, Florence* (New York: George Brazillier, 1972). Here I use a copy housed in Special Collections, The University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

⁶ Elina Gertsman, "Books of Hours," *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1647–51; here 1647.

from other medieval books was their demotic appeal; acquired by individuals and families, a *Book of Hours* may have been the only book possessed by a household" (1647). We can even identify major sites of production of *Books of Hours*, such as Oxford, London, Sarum (Salisbury) in England, Paris in France, Bruges and Ghent (Flanders), but then also in Tours and Bourges (France), through reference to the specific uses, or liturgical performances, commonly practiced in those regions.

Since these small devotional books met such a great demand, commercial scriptoria tended to specialize on this genre. This, in turn, led to relatively standardized formats, images, designs, although we can be certain that many of the best artists of that time contributed in one way or the other to the illumination program, particularly in the case of most valuable and costly specimens, adding their individual perspectives and styles.⁷ Some *Books of Hours* do not make a huge impression, serving only humble purposes, while others emerge as outstanding masterpieces of late-medieval art and manuscript production. Although many of the *Books of Hours* were limited to a small size, their brilliance of colors and themes in the illuminations, the beauty of the calligraphic script, and the overall care with which the entire manuscript was compiled make even the smallest exemplars to most precious items.⁸

As scholarship has already noted a number of times, this genre impressively reflects the late-medieval laity's great interest in joining the devotional practice by monks and priests, in privatizing the religious practice, and in transforming the liturgical service into a kind of individualized performance involving text and images, notes, and even marginal drawings. A vast majority of owners seems to have been women, who apparently greatly enjoyed this opportunity to participate in a spiritualized life, although they tended not to follow the same stricture as to the monastic Divine Office. Most *Books of Hours* were composed in Latin, but in the Netherlands the majority of representatives were actually composed in the vernacular because of the founder of the *Devotio moderna* movement, Gert Grote (1340–1384), who himself compiled texts for lay readers that basically constitute *Books of Hours* in their own terms.⁹

In many cases we can clearly tell the origin of a representative book and the place of its actual use, which reflects the vast network of the late-medieval book market. The popularity of this genre began to wane only in the middle of the sixteenth century, when many examples were either discarded or their parchment pages were scraped clean and reused for other purposes. Fortunately, especially those with impressive illuminations have survived because they continued to exert

⁷ Janet Backhouse, *Illumination from Books of Hours* (London: The British Library, 2004), 5–13.

⁸ Eberhard König, *Die Belles Heures des Duc de Berry: Sternstunden der Buchkunst* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2004), 30–35.

⁹ *Het getijdenboek van Geert Grote, naar het Haagse hs. 133 E 21*, uitg. door Nicolaas van Wijk. Leidsche Drukken en herdrukken. Kleine reeks, 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1940).

great aesthetic appeal and were treasured by owners of major libraries throughout the centuries.¹⁰

When we turn our attention to the calendars, a clear conceptual design emerges before our eyes. "The illustrations most commonly found are occupations of the months, but signs of the zodiac also occur quite frequently; both may appear on the same page, but sometimes, when each month spans two pages, the occupation will be on the recto and the sign of the zodiac on the verso."¹¹ The illuminations served to enhance the religious messages, which commonly addressed the life of the Virgin Mary, with the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity of Christ, the Annunciation of the Birth of Christ to the shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, and the Coronation of the Virgin in heaven. As Robert Clemens and Timothy Graham now emphasize, following the insights already established by Victor Leroquais, "The hours are generally followed by two items found in nearly all Books of Hours: the Seven Penitential Psalms and the litany."¹²

Although the individual sections in these *Books of Hours* closely follow traditional patterns of text selection and visual motifs, the artists still enjoyed considerable freedom, we might say, to develop the concrete scenes both playfully and individualistically. In this regard, we can only agree with Clemens and Graham that "Books of Hours present a window onto the world of late medieval devotion, even as their illustrations afford a panoramic view of the richness of late medieval manuscript art."¹³

Art historians have often pointed out the typological, or formulaic, character of the rich illuminations in those private devotional books, as if the seemingly endless repetitions would make it impossible for us to grasp how those artists perceived rural space. But every typology is also anchored in one way or the other in the concrete observation of reality, irrespective of the lens which the artist might

¹⁰ Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: George Braziller, in association with the Pierpont Morgan Library, 1997); Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (1986; London: Phaidon Press, 1995); Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490. A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 6 (London: Harvey Miller, 1996). The research on this topic is really legion.

¹¹ Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), 209.

¹² Clemens and Graham, *Introduction* (see note 11), 213. See Victor Leroquais, *Un Livre d'heures de Jean sans Peur, Duc de Bourgogne (1404–1419)* (Paris: Andrieux, 1939); John P. Harthan, *Books of Hours and their Owners* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977); Fanny Faÿ-Sallois, *A Treasury of Hours: Selections From Illuminated Prayer Books* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005); Charity Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England. Library of Medieval Women* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2006).

¹³ Clemens and Graham, *Introduction* (see note 11), 220. See also Albrecht Classen, "The Book of Hours in the Middle Ages," *Futhark: Revista de Investigación y Cultura* 2 (2007): 111–29.

have used.¹⁴ As Virginia Reinburg observes, although members of the wealthy urban class demonstrated the greatest interest in this genre, the urban context and social background are virtually absent in the illuminations decorating *Books of Hours*. By contrast, the artists tended to focus on genteel pursuits, such as hawking or “May-ing,” reflecting on traditional concepts of the courtly *pastourelle* or the *locus amoenus*. Concomitantly, the illuminators favored rural scenes: “There is a consistent sense in these scenes of a placid, bucolic, unchanging world, into which there seldom penetrates any of the hard work and harsh poverty that was the reality of this life.”¹⁵

Most strikingly, the bulk of these *Books of Hours* was created at the very same time when, in the wake of the Black Death and similar, or repeated, devastating epidemics, the social relationship between peasants and the aristocracy began to change rapidly, often triggered by major peasant revolts, such as in France in 1358 (*Jacquerie*), in England in 1381, and elsewhere (Flanders, Spain, Italy). The visual depictions of rural scenes in these private devotional books reveal a certain desire to project most peaceful, bucolic settings as backdrops for the aristocratic world, which obviously felt deeply threatened by the social unrest and longed for visual dream images that could assure them of the continued stability on their country estates. Nevertheless, the inclusion of those elements characteristic of rural space in these *Books of Hours* allows us to pursue ecocritical perspectives, meaning the probing of how much those artists were even aware of their natural environment and whether they could convince their customers to subscribe to the new illustration program with its highly ‘realistic’ approach.¹⁶

Landscape and natural scenes can be understood as “a form of narrative image mediating between the physical environment and human culture . . . crossing conventional boundaries between the biological and the imaginary, the body and the environment, the subjective and the objective.”¹⁷ All representations of nature, both in literary texts and in images, reflect specific human perspectives, which thus allow us to understand the level of awareness, appreciation, or fear of the

¹⁴ Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*. With essays by Lawrence R. Poos, Virginia Reinburg, and John Plummer (New York: George Braziller; Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery, 1997).

¹⁵ Virginia Reinburg, “Social History and the Book of Hours,” *Time Sanctified* (see note 14), 33–38; here 37.

¹⁶ Other approaches to this topic of rural space draw their information for example from the *fabliaux*; see Danièle Alexander-Bidon et Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, *Le quotidien au temps des fabliaux: Textes, images, objets*. Espaces Médiévaux (Paris: Editions A. & J. Picard, 2003). See also Gillian Rudd, *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature* (2007; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). For further discussion of social riots and unrest in the Middle Ages, see the Introduction to this volume.

¹⁷ Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

physical world outside of the subject (cultural symbolism).¹⁸ Instead of limiting our approach to the *Books of Hours* by way of focusing on the religious and art-historical aspects only, the analysis of the rural space in the manuscript illustrations will allow us to comprehend more specifically the interaction between the artists/patron and his/her natural environment.¹⁹

Throughout the Middle Ages virtually all aspects of nature and space carried a symbolic, allegorical, or iconographic meaning (in the sense as D. W. Robertson had proclaimed in his *Preface to Chaucer*, 1962), but beginning at the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we also notice an innovative curiosity about the natural environment for its own sake, indicating a new pleasure and delight about the fauna and flora surrounding the narrative figures and protagonists in literary texts, including the *Books of Hours*.

St. Francis of Assisi can be credited with having turned his contemporaries' attention to their natural environment where they could discover encounters with the divine as well because all creatures and plants were made by God.²⁰ Ecocriticism reflects, as Gillian Rudd now explains, "the admission that humans are too readily self-referential in their attitudes. Ecocriticism strives to move away from the anthropocentrism which creates and operates a value-system in which the only things that are seen, let alone valued, are those that serve some kind of purpose in human terms."²¹ The ecocritical reading of *Books of Hours* empowers us to recognize small but important new elements in those marvelous miniatures that increasingly enter the artists' design and populate previously highly stereotyped spaces.

Since there is a considerable variety of *Books of Hours*, despite a noticeable consistency in the structural make-up and design of each copy, it might be almost impossible to reach a firm conclusion as to the function of the rural space depicted in these illuminations. My primary interest here focuses on the awareness of specific details presented by the artists, such as trees, flowers, birds, animals,

¹⁸ For a standard definition of ecocriticism, see Rebecca Doughlass, "Ecocriticism and Middle English Literature," *Studies in Medievalism* 10 (1998): 136–63; here 138: it is a "reading with attention to treatments of nature, land, and place, informed by a desire to understand past and present connections between literature and human attitudes regarding the earth."

¹⁹ Peter Barry, "Ecocriticism," *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, ed. id. 3rd ed. (1995; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). See also Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011). See also the respectable article cum bibliography in *Wikipedia*, online at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecocriticism> (last accessed on Oct. 19, 2011).

²⁰ Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes Towards the Environment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²¹ Rudd, *Greenery* (see note 16), 5–6.

mountains, rivers, and meadows. Behind every dream image we can detect a factual world, either as a contrast or as a corrective, but in both cases the one dimension cannot fully exist without the other, like the linguistic phenomena of the *signe* and the *signifié*. Studying the nature scenes in the *Books of Hours* enables us to grasp late-medieval awareness of the physical space in which people lived, especially outside of their houses, cities, castles, and monasteries.²²

To address the issue pursued here, I can only select a handful of most remarkable representatives, beginning with the truly stunning *Grandes Heures de Rohan* from ca. 1415–1416, in which some figures are clearly modeled after those in the *Très Riches Heures* by the Limbourg brothers, or rather the *Belles Heures* painted by Paul de Limbourg for All Saints. The original owner must have hailed from Paris, but in June of 1416, a few months after the death of the Duke of Berry, “the Duchess Yolande of Anjou, the wife of his nephew, Duke Louis II, borrowed it and soon bought it.”²³ However, it seems most likely that the *Grandes Heures de Rohan* was created for Charles, Duke of Berry and from October 1422 King of France.

The Rohan Master—in all likelihood there were several artists involved in the production of this *Book of Hours*, but for simplicity’s sake I stick to the singular here—proves to be highly unusual in his strategies in the paintings, and he certainly seems to have originated from outside of France, perhaps from the Netherlands or Germany. He might have started his career in the Provence and subsequently seems to have moved to Troyes from ca. 1410 to 1414, after which he settled in Paris. While the Boucicaut Master and the Limbourg Brothers were among the first to recognize the beauty and power of nature for their manuscript illuminations, the Rohan Master focused more on somber moods and the expression of emotions.²⁴ Nevertheless, we would not do justice to his work if we disregarded the considerable degree of attention to elements in nature.

For the month of February, for instance, he chose to present two elegantly dressed workers who cut trees or uproot them. A fire burns behind them, while a little dog struts around. For March he selected an early spring scene, with the trees already covered with a dense canopy of leaves. A richly clothed horseman is positioned at the edge of a forest, or at least a wall of thinly-stemmed trees, the branches of which have all been cut. We gain a clear sense of a park-like setting, which the knight’s and his horse’s trappings underscore even further. The image

²² For an older, but still very useful approach with plenty of literary data, see Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: Elek, 1973).

²³ *The Rohan Master: A Book of Hours. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (M.S. Latin 9471)*. Introduction by Millard Meis. Introduction and Commentaries by Marcel Thomas (New York: George Braziller, 1973), 13. See now the facsimile *Grandes horas de Rohan (Ms. Lat. 9471, Biblioteca nacional de Francia): libro de estudios* ([Madrid]: A. y N. ediciones; [Paris]: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2006).

²⁴ Meiss, “Introduction” (see note 23), 17.

for Scorpio offers a striking array of nature details, with a grass cutter in the center. Although he is doing the work of a farmer, and although he seems naked underneath his white coat, his fine shirt with golden stripes indicate the playfulness of the scene. In the foreground the quite common lap dog sits on a red cloth, waiting for his master to finish the work. A curious detail in the right-hand foreground underscores the artist's fascination with realistic elements, since we notice the cutter's boots tidily placed there, perhaps because they might hamper him in his activity. Behind the man we see a waddle fence, and then some rather fanciful looking trees with yellow blossoms.

The two workers cutting grain in the image for Lion (Leo) wear only white clothing, and white head dresses, but they are also bare-footed and expose their legs as well. The artist paid particular attention to the field of wheat and the individual stalks, which one of the men binds together into bundles. Again, we notice a pair of boots, a lap-dog, and then also a small keg for their refreshment. The two thrashers in the image for Virgo are similarly dressed, but they do not wear any head-gear, probably because they work in a shed. Most beautifully, for the month of August the artist has chosen a most beautiful scene with a sower walking over the field, although a number of tall trees seems to stand in the way. This time the man wears his shoes because he is striding over the rough, naked soil. In the foreground we discover two bee-hives and a lap-dog, once again, while a tree stump signals the work which the farmers have already completed to carve that field out of the forest.

Most curiously, the sower seems to represent both the upper and the lower class at once, considering his clothing. While his tunic and overcoat appear to be of high quality, his leggings are completely torn at the knees, which might be a good representative of the zodiac sign, Libra, as indicated on the top portion through a scale.²⁵ The artist of the miniature for the month of October delights our eyes with an amazingly realistic scene of grape harvesting, although in most other *books of hours* that event in harvest time was placed in September. While a man and a woman cut the grapes and place them in baskets, another man carries a large wicker basket for grapes on his back, about to empty the content into a large vat where a third man is stomping on the grapes. A fourth man pours the grape juice through a funnel into a large barrel.

The extent to which all figures wear strangely embroidered clothing, not fitting for ordinary workers, clearly signals the artist's interest to appeal to his/her aristocratic audience, pretending as if that kind of work would be a joyful activity also for members of the nobility, perhaps masquerading as farmers. So typical of

²⁵ Thomas, in his commentary to fol. 13, also notices the discrepancy between the embroidered robe and the pathetic breeches, as he identifies them. Both the color white and the tight fit indicate, however, that these are the leggings.

most *Books of Hours*, the scene is characterized by a dream-like setting where the realistic depiction of the wine bushes, the demarcation between green land and the sandy work place, and the luxurious clothing create astonishing contrasts. The artist must have closely studied the trellises normally used for wine stalks, so he seems to have been quite familiar with the technique of producing wine out of the grapes. There is little doubt about the concrete setting, although it still begs for a moralizing interpretation, as was commonly the case with medieval miniature illustrations, especially in *Books of Hours*.

As Maurits Smeyers notes, reflecting on a comprehensive overview of Flemish book illuminations from the late Middle Ages, "Flemish miniaturists made significant contributions to the development of the depiction of landscapes in Flemish art The calendar illustrations in books of hours provided an ideal place for landscape imagery. Because of their full-page scale, these were deemed to be just as important as the images that accompanied the sacred texts."²⁶ From an art-historical perspective, our primary task would be to decode the multiple signs on the page, and to unravel the religious secrets hidden behind the panoply of a delightfully realistic landscape. For us, however, suffice it to focus on the obvious, the artist's great interest in the realistic features because the goal of realizing true religious devotion—at least for members of the laity—could only be achieved not by projecting images of biblical scenes and episodes, but by situating the viewer within the context of rural space.

Considering the overarching interest in conveying religious instruction and in providing illustrations for biblical scenes, the obvious delight in the playful inclusion of nature scenes, of peasants and their labor, animals, and farm life strikes us as most noteworthy, perhaps as the art-historical harbinger of the imminent paradigm shift. After all, most illuminations focus almost exclusively on the specific events as described in the biblical text and do not leave any room for the eye to wander off into the background or the margins of the painting, especially when we move from the Calendar to the Gospels, Prayers, the Hours of the Virgin, Hours of the Cross, and the Office of the Dead.

However, even here we encounter remarkable exceptions, such as the full-page painting in the section of the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 85v). In this panel, which seems to be influenced by the Italian style, two angels hover in the sky in the top left corner, reading from a scroll, apparently announcing the birth of Christ. Below them, in a rather mountainous landscape, an oversized shepherd, facing the viewer, is stomping his feet in a dancing move while blowing his flute. At the same time his wife, kneeling below him and of much smaller proportion, milks one of the ewes. While both figures seem to be unaware of the dramatic scene

²⁶ Maurits Smeyers, *Flemish Miniatures from the 8th to the Mid-16th Century: The Medieval World on Parchment*. Trans. by Karen Bowen and Dirk Imhof (Leuven: Brepols, 1999), 422.

unfolding above them, the dog howls and some of the sheep look upwards toward the angels. Curiously, the ram attentively gazes at the shepherd, who does not seem to notice any of the miraculous events above his head.

The artist demonstrates a curiously mixed approach to rural space, depicting the rocky background in a very stereotypical fashion, considering their craggy appearance, with no vegetation growing on them except for some forlorn trees that seem to have broken out in flowers. But his focus on the animals, on the dancing farmer, his clothing, his unshaven face, and then on the woman's figure signal a great awareness of the importance of the realistic details and the enjoyment of the rural space.

This does not mean that the artist disfavored urban settings and domestic interiors, which we observe especially in the other sections of this *Book of Hours*. But this one illumination fully confirms how much the countryside also loomed large in the artist's and probably also his patron's mind, especially given the biblical context with the shepherds being the first to whom Christ's birth had been announced. Not excluding possible symbolic or allegorical readings of the huge shepherd, we can certainly confirm that the artist was fascinated by the opportunity to present such a figure, blowing the flute, apparently day-dreaming and completely self-contained in his activity. We also note how much the artist did not shy away from depicting the shepherd's wrinkles in his face, his almost obese body, and the fairly splendid undercoat.

By contrast, the farm-hand, or peasant, cutting wheat in the illumination of the Holy Family's Flight into Egypt (fol. 99r), appears rather disheveled and poor, wearing nothing but a white shirt and underpants, which contrasts starkly with the splendid appearance of the two knights on horseback who arrive on behalf of King Herod and inquire with him whether he might have seen the Holy Family in their escape. The account reflected here is borrowed from the Apocrypha and is predicated on the miracle of the field of grain. "Along the way, the fugitives have crossed a field which has recently been sown, and behind them the grain has sprung up so quickly that it is ready to be harvested by the time Herod's men arrive."²⁷ Whereas the farmer tells them the truth, "they crossed this field when the grain had not yet begun to grow," which means nothing in face of the miracle, the knights misread his words and believe that the group must have passed months ago, so they give up and return home.

There is no need for us to investigate the allegorical meanings and biblical references much further, since the context explicate them so clearly. For our purposes, however, we can focus on the appearance on the farmer alone, who stands in the field barefoot, holding the sickle in his right hand, while he is looking up to the horses, demurring before these two great lords. The artist paid great

²⁷ Thomas, "Commentaries" (see note 23), no. 53.

attention to the field of grain, attempting to leave the clear impression of each individual plant. Below the peasant we see a sleeping figure in a red coat, even smaller than he, resting on bundled sheaves of wheat. The standing farmer displays a long beard, his hair seems already to be thinning out, and his face is marked by deep wrinkles, reflecting the arrival of old age in dramatic fashion.²⁸

Considering the context, this man serves an important function in this apocryphal account because he assists the Holy Family to escape from Herod's knights. In the larger composition of the painting, he seems to be only of secondary importance, considering the central dominance of the Virgin Mary, holding the Christ child, and Joseph, who are all standing in a cramped position behind some small trees and rocks. Herod's knights occupy the lower right hand corner, displaying sumptuous clothing, head gears, sitting on equally splendid saddles. By contrast, the farmer in the field of grain represents true humbleness, simplicity, but also veracity, honesty, and devotion, pursuing his work in the only way he knows to do, answering upon the knights' question, yet without offering further explanations, thus hiding the miracle to them.

In this religious context, then, we undoubtedly observe the artist's considerable interest in the world of farmers and their activities in the field because the divine workings have nothing to do with the social status an individual enjoys. The illumination thus intimately connects the Holy Family with the humble farmer, who deserves our respect despite his poverty and simplicity. One small visual feature might support this reading further. The divine light which shines from above and pours on to the Holy Family seems to be extending down to the field of grain, painted in exactly the same golden color. Herod's knights, by contrast, occupy a separate space, unaware both of the Holy Family and their innocent but central supporter, the simple farmer. Significantly, this motif, but then much more centrally developed, finds its parallel in the image for the month of July (fol. 10r) and of August (fol. 9v), equally realistic and detail-oriented. Otherwise, however, the religious themes dominate and leave no further room for elements reflecting on rural space.

The *Book of Hours* by the so-called Spitz Master from Paris, ca. 1420, today, after having passed through many different hands, in the possession of the J. Paul Getty Museum, offers an interesting contrastive perspective, where rural space emerges much less dramatically, but still being of great significance. Most of the illuminations follow standard models, demonstrating little interest in expanding on the nature scenes; instead the artist/s focused mostly on the biblical scenarios and situated the central figure in a somewhat developed rural space. The Nativity

²⁸ *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2007).

Scene on fol. 84, for instance, presents an almost idyllic scene, far removed from the true rural setting, with the animals, the shepherds, and the Holy couple all gazing devoutly onto the Christ child, who is lying on a spot in the grass surrounded by angels, with God's rays shining directly onto Him. The artist knew, however, that he had to offer more details, and so he has populated the slowly rising pasture and the hills in the background with grazing sheep.²⁹

In the illumination showing "The Annunciation to the Shepherds" (fol. 89v), that rural space is considerably expanded, but its idyllic nature does not change, showing us a group of three men, either lying, sitting, or standing, paying close attention to the angels' words. Their sheep calmly and concentrated only on feeding graze in the pasture, mostly around a barren tree, but in the background we recognize also a mill situated on a hilltop, and the outlines of a townscape on the opposing hill. In the Escape to Egypt scene the idyllic nature intensifies, with tiny little trees dotting the landscape. However, the threat resulting from Herod's soldiers, who already emerge in the background next to a forest and a hill upon which a castle is located, is not ignored. Nevertheless, the scene with the Virgin Mary, holding Jesus in her lap, and with the old Joseph holding the reins of the donkey, gazing at the newborn, exudes peacefulness, highlighting the spiritual dimension even in this dangerous situation.

If we leaf through this *Book of Hour*, we come across more and more of these images that are modeled very similarly to each other, with some hills, pastures, trees, and sheep herds in the background, where we regularly observe the rise of some towers and spires of a city perched on a hill, such as in the scene for The Agony in the Garden (fol. 169v). There Christ is separated from His disciples through a waddled fence, kneeling in front of a sharply pointed hill, praying to God, while the soldiers are already arriving in the background. Every time the dark blue sky is dotted with golden stars, but the complete absence of clouds or sun light underscores the fictional condition perpetuated here. As to be expected, the Spitz master was certainly influenced by the Limbourg brothers, as many of his motifs conform to theirs. But he was "evidently dissatisfied with the shallow setting in the *Belles Heures*, however, for he inserted three staggered hillocks beyond the Limbourg's foreground rise" in The Annunciation to the Shepherds.³⁰

As art historians have observed, there is a greater emphasis on "compositional density, copious patterning, and exuberant polychromy" compared to other, contemporary *Books of Hours*.³¹ But this should not concern us here in all those

²⁹ Gregory T. Clark, *The Spitz Master: A Parisian Book of Hours* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum Studies on Art, 2003), 223.

³⁰ Clark, *The Spitz Master* (see note 29), 61.

³¹ Clark, *The Spitz Master* (see note 29), 66.

details, because the emphasis rests on the question to what extent rural space comes into focus and gained in importance during the late Middle Ages.

Even though the Spitz Master did not care to elaborate more on the rural background of his illuminations, he certainly delighted in experimenting with a number of new details, such as the habitual flock of sheep and birds flying in the air or sitting on the roof top of the cow shed in *The Nativity*, the waddle fence and the small creek in *The Agony in the Garden*, or, so far not mentioned, the bountifulness of flowers and shrubs in *The Virgin in an Enclosed Garden* in another *Book of Hours* by the same Master.³² Most significantly, he demonstrated an enormous interest in embellishing the margins of his illuminations with a plethora of animals, plants, flowers, birds, and even monsters, conveying quite a different sense of rural space through proxy elements. In *The Annunciation to the Shepherds* he pursued an even different approach, filling the marginal space with a throng of angels, birds, plants, dogs, sheep, shepherds, and a variety of leaves. Although we do not detect any background or depth perception there, with all these drawings remaining on a purely descriptive, two-dimensional level, we are supposed to perceive how much the natural space was permeated by the divine space, as represented by the angels.

The same applies to “*The Flight into Egypt*” where both groups of knights, individual knights, and farmers appear, each of them creating rural space on their own. The knights replicate Herod’s soldiers, although they figure only in a one-dimensional space. Two individual knights pretend to be in a joust or are hunting with a falcon. One peasant is shown cutting wheat with his sickle, another is presented in a walking position, holding a scythe over his shoulder, looking backwards, while a third peasant, or a person of a higher rank, simply gazes into the distance. Although the central image does not contain any rural motif in the narrow sense of the word, the Holy Family traverses a rural space, which is underscored by the peasants’ activities. The knights, on the other hand, suggest space at large through their movements. In *David in Prayer* the fanciful marginal drawings increase in preponderance, almost threatening to overshadow the central image because the individual creatures, mostly monstrous in appearance, are of much larger size.

While the scene with David presents a harmonious world, peaceful and quiet, obviously reflecting the intimate relationship between macrocosm (with God and the heavenly army of angels hovering above) and microcosm (King David, the shepherds, and, beyond our view, the city dwellers in the background), the margin contains, as is so often the case in late-medieval manuscripts, a world in uproar and tumult, with lots of leaves and branches shooting forth tendrils in many different directions and colors. Two monstrous looking huntsmen aim their arrows

³² Clark, *The Spitz Master* (see note 29), 65.

at a bird, which situates us somehow in a wild forest, almost impenetrable because of the countless vines.³³

Whereas this famous king from the Old Testament kneels in a lonely landscape—the shepherds are far removed from him—being directly connected with God above his head, the margin, certainly rural in a variety of ways, seems to be dominated by an inaudible cacophony, where wild things and odd looking creatures demarcate the material world with its chaotic properties, which powerfully reflects the dialectic nature of medieval epistemology.³⁴ In this regard rural space was just as important as urban or courtly space, since it provided, in its contrastive character, an important backdrop to the divine world, the courtly sphere, and the well-organized urban dimension. Spirituality, for instance, could not be achieved, as the artists of the *Books of Hours* indicated, if the viewer did not understand the paradox of human existence, caught between the materiality and the ideality of this world.

Significantly, rural space emerges, even if only in its park-like appearance, mostly in northern European *Books of Hours*, where the artists and scribes had much less access to classical literature, for instance, than in Italy, where the *Sforza Hours*, for instance, created by the Milanese illuminator and priest Giovan Pietro Birago for the Duchess Bonza Sforza (died 1503), represents the new approach deeply influenced already by the Renaissance culture.³⁵ Here we recognize many different attempts to situate the specific biblical events in the characteristic late-medieval or already Renaissance environment, but the artists were mostly concerned with the development of the ensembles of figures, which meant that the background space, certainly finely modeled, lost in significance again. If we see nature, it seems highly stylized and only frames the central events in the foreground. There are no more typically rural scenes, no farmers, no fields, and

³³ This is, of course, not a new observation, quite on the contrary; see Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: the Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992); see also the contributions to *Scientia in margine: études sur les marginalia dans les manuscrits scientifiques du moyen âge à la renaissance*, réunies par Danielle Jacquart et Charles Burnett. *Hautes études médiévales et modernes*, 88 (Geneva: Droz, 2005); *Signs on the Edge: Space, Text and Margin in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. by Sarah Larratt Keefer and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. *Mediaevalia Groningana*, N.S., 10 (Paris and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007).

³⁴ This seems to have been a major feature of medieval philosophy, theology, and scholasticism; see Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic, and the Poetics of Didacticism*. *Figurae* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Constance Brittain Bouchard, *"Every Valley Shall be Exalted": The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

³⁵ Mark Evans, *The Sforza Hours* (London: The British Library, 1992). Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), daughter of the Hapsburgian Emperor Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy, inherited the *Sforza Hours* when her husband Phillibert, Duke of Savoy, died in 1504. Margaret became one of the greatest patrons of the arts and literature during the early sixteenth century (24–25).

virtually no animals to be seen, while city images, architectural interiors, carefully-trimmed trees and some vistas on distant landscapes dominated, which are, however, all civilized, that is, occupied by cities, churches, or castles.

This does not mean, however, that rural space was condemned to disappear from this genre altogether. On the contrary, as the *Book of Hours*, originally in the possession of August the Younger, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg (1579–1666), convincingly illustrates, the interest in rural activities, in the peasant population, and the natural environment could easily reenter this genre.³⁶ Nature scenes play greatest importance, as to be expected, in the Calendar, with individual illustrations reserved for each month.

After the first image has shown us individuals in a room eating (fol. 2r), the second takes us outside to the winter landscape, where cold weather forces people to dress warmly, especially because snow covers the ground (fol. 2v). The illuminations for February present an orchard where no leaves have yet sprouted (fol. 3r), and a village scene with a man carrying a large branch (fol. 3v). In March the peasants have to begin to work the grounds in preparation for the seeding season (fols. 4r–4v). The images for April switch from the world of the farmers to the one of the rich and wealthy, perhaps even of the aristocrats, since now scenes of pleasure and leisure in garden-like settings dominate (fols. 5r–v). Only when we turn to the month of June do we encounter rural activities again, with a peasant and his wife work on the meadow, cutting grass and readying it for the harvest (fol. 6r–v). This is then continued in the images for the subsequent months, dominated by the characteristic agricultural activities necessary for that season. The illuminations for the months of November and December focus on farmers' work with their animals, concluding with illuminations showing us butchering.

As much as this sequence of images conforms to the tradition of Calendar images in *Books of Hours*, the artist still reveals his attention to detail, his awareness of the concrete work activities in the rural space, and his considerable respect for the farmer who performs important work from which all members of society can profit.

Until now I have not even examined the most famous *Book of Hours*, the one by the Brothers of Limbourg who produced it for the Duke of Berry, but that specimen supersedes all the others and can be called the artistic triumph in the entire genre, and this already in the early fifteenth century (ca. 1410–1418). Scholars have poured many times over their masterpiece, so suffice it here to draw only from one image, representing the month of February.³⁷ The number of details

³⁶ *Das Stundenbuch Herzog Augusts d. J.*, ed. Joachim Fischer and Gabriele Werthmann (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 2004).

³⁷ Edmond Pognon, *Les Très Riches heures du Duc de Berry: 15th-Century Manuscript*, trans. by David Macrae ([New York: Crescent Books, 1979).

being presented is just amazing, indicating not only the artists' great eye for detail, but also their awareness and appreciation of the life of the rural population. The viewer's eye is allowed to wander both into the opened farm house, with three people sitting on benches, holding their feet to the fire, out into the farm, where the sheep huddle in their shed, pigeons pick their food, and then beyond to the forest where a man is chopping down a tree, while another takes his donkey, heavily loaded with wooden sticks, toward the near-by settlement, probably only a hamlet. This picture is also so famous because whereas the first woman sitting closest to the viewer lifts up her dress only slightly, avoiding exposing her lower body parts, the couple behind her does not seem to feel any shame, sitting on their seats and allowing their clothing to slip up beyond their genitals.³⁸

But perhaps we are misled into a modern interpretation here, because white textiles are hanging on a rack above their heads, and since the peasants are so poor that they have only one set of underwear, they have to go naked when they have done a wash.

Apart from this pornographic (?) or simply sexual allusion, the artists clearly conveyed how much the February frost hurts people, as the appearance of one person walking through the yard, extensively covered from head down to the knees, indicates. Snow covers the ground everywhere, and the sky is grey. This is truly February, in the village, among the rural population. However, the first woman, who averts her eyes from the peasant couple, seems to be a noble lady, perhaps a traveler who sought refuge from the cold, and now feels rather embarrassed by the sight she has to witness in the farmer's house. We would, of course, go badly astray if we ignored numerous allegorical allusions hidden everywhere, but for our purposes it suffices to recognize how much the artists enjoyed working with realistic details pertaining to the architecture, the peasants, and their animals.

Already the image for the month of April reveals how much the rural world only served as a realistic backdrop without further significance for the highly aristocratic audience. In this image (fol. 4v) the eye is focused on a group of richly dressed aristocrats, two men and two women, with three figures to their sides, equally belonging to the same class. In the distance a spectacular castle rises up high, which might have been the Château of Dourdan, next to which we discover an assembly of small houses, though even these do not seem to be the dwellings of peasants, considering how large they are, equipped with chimneys, and

³⁸ *The Limbourg Brothers: Reflections on the Origins and the Legacy of Three Illuminators from Nijmegen*, ed. Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009); see also Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs, with contributions by Boudewijn Bakker, Gregory T. Clark, Marie-Thérèse Gousset, and others, *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the French Court, 1400-1416*. Catalogue of the exhibition Nijmegen, Holland, 28 August - 20 November 2005 (Nijmegen, Holland: Ludion, 2005).

apparently not equipped to house animals. On the right hand side we are attracted to an “isometric projection of the orchard with its walled enclosure and the crenellated building” (22) next to it. Nature is here under complete control, with the trees all standing in straight rows, their stems cleaned from all unnecessary branches, while the orchard itself represents nothing but artificial gardening. Below the castle, hardly visible to our eyes, we notice two fishermen, while otherwise the entire setting, as rural as it might appear at first sight, represents the world of the aristocracy.³⁹

The illustrations for the following months once again allow the world of the peasants to return, since they provide the essential food for all of society. But they prove to be nothing but secondary decoration, while the members of the court pass by, occupied with their falcon hunting, as in the image for the month of August (fol. 8v). Nevertheless, the artist/s still delighted in drawing remarkable details, showing us one farmer who has already slipped out of his clothing getting ready for a dip in the water, where two of his comrades are already swimming. In the illumination for the month of September, the huge castle, which had been built by Louis II of Anjou, certainly dwarves the harvest scene below it, showing us a group of male and female workers in a vineyard. Probably poking fun at the crudeness and silliness of the peasants, the artist/s not only portray a variety of collectors, bent over, picking grapes, but also one worker from his backside, bending over and exposing his rear. He might be naked, or simply wearing white underpants, but the artist/s certainly found the scene hilarious and was certain that he/they could thus offer entertainment to the noble audience.

Only the month of November, depicted by Jean Colombe seventy years after the work of the Limbourg brothers, is almost exclusively reserved for rural space, showing us a swineherd ready to throw a stick into the branches of oak trees so that his swines can get more acorns. These animals occupy all our attention, and so the forest of oak trees, while the chateau in the top left corner hardly becomes visible. The artist certainly succeeded in capturing the animals, including the watch dog, amazingly well, and he also managed impressively well the dense grove, behind which we notice, in the far distance, a valley through which a river runs.

Let us turn to a final example which almost might take us out of the Middle Ages, and yet demonstrates intimate connections with the artistic tradition that we have analyzed so far with respect to rural space. The octave-sized *Golf Book* from ca. 1540, today housed in the British Library (Additional 24098), was painted by

³⁹ Raymond Cazelles and Johannes Rathofer, *Illuminations of Heaven and Earth: The Glories of the Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Foreword by Umberto Eco (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988).

Simon Bening.⁴⁰ The name of this *Book of Hours* derives from one small marginal drawing for the month of September, showing a group of children playing golf, or some similar game using sticks to push a round object in a competitive manner. Bening belonged to the sixteenth-century Ghent-Bruges school, but we cannot be certain who might have commissioned this work.⁴¹

Keeping the work of the Limbourg brothers in mind, we notice in Bening's images, similarly to other representatives of this genre, the intricate, elegant, and sophisticated combination of rural space with figures from the nobility. For example, in fol. 24v, a noble man, carrying a falcon in his left hand, passes through an agricultural setting where two farmers cut grass with their long scythes, while a woman, with the help of a man, rakes the grass. The building in the background might be a monastery, or a country estate, but it is neither a farm nor a castle. The peacefulness of the scene could not be more striking, and the artist has certainly enhanced the effectiveness through the careful attention to many details, not ignoring two ducks swimming in a canal next to the meadow.

The narrative character of these images is emphasized on fol. 25r where we see, in the bottom margin, a hay wagon pulled by two horses, while a farmer is sitting astride one of them, and two others accompanying him on their way. However, we have to be careful and avoid reading these images as straightforward reflections of the agricultural world. As Carlos Miranda García-Tejedor emphasizes, "in line with the Renaissance philosophy that nature affects the emotions of the leading characters, the landscape adapts to the dramatic aspect of each scene. . . . Hence the landscapes are in line with the dramatic sense of the representation. . . ." ⁴² Nevertheless, the artist's interest in the realistic setting, that is, the rural space, is undeniable, whatever the underlying purpose of each individual scene might have been.

On fol. 25v we are witness to a calm group of farmers, one couple resting from the hard work of cutting the grain, while another farmer is still involved with that activity. A peasant woman approaches from the left, carrying a heavy basket on her head and a big jug in her left hand. The image is beautifully structured by a tranquil river running diagonally through the entire landscape, disappearing in the far left, where a church rises up on a slope. On fol. 26v we are witnesses to a typical farming scene, in the foreground a worker guiding two horses across a

⁴⁰ For another example of Bening's work, see Judith Anne Testa, *The Stockholm-Kassel Book of Hours: A Reintegrated Manuscript from the Shop of Simon Bening*. Acta Bibliothecae Regiae Stockholmiensis LIII (Stockholm: Kungl. biblioteket, 1992).

⁴¹ Here I consulted the facsimile edition (Barcelona: M. Moleiro Editor, S.A., 2004), a copy of which is housed in the Special Collections of the University of Arizona Library, Tucson. For in-depth information about this *Book of Hours*, see Carlos Miranda García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (Barcelona: M. Moleiro Editor, S.A., 2004).

⁴² García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (see note 41), 76.

field, pulling a rake, while a reaper near him is sowing already the seed. In the background another farmer drives a plough along the edge, and the far distance is occupied by a farm house, and then a lake even further behind.

The name of *Golf Book* derives, as observed above, only from one marginal drawing of four children playing a kind of golf in the margin of fol. 27r. These are not children living in the city; instead they can be identified as belonging to the class of farmers. However, already on fol. 27v we see a group of men of the upper class debating with each other, while workers to their right either press grapes or pour the juice into a vat. However, the wild forest, which climbs up in the background, is not far away, only separated from the foreground through a lake and a wall. Bening demonstrates a keen interest in blending the difference between the social classes and enjoys presenting to us various representatives almost in a group together, as on fol. 20v. Most dramatically, in the foreground a sweaty and tired worker lifts his cap in a greeting motion, submissively saluting a noble lady who seems to talk to him, maybe about plans regarding what flowers or herbs to plant in the garden. Behind them to the right two men are chopping down a tree, while two more elegantly dressed men, obviously belonging to the rich patriciate, stand further away involved in a conversation. In the background we observe a man on a white horse crossing a bridge leading to an walled city structure. Outside, however, on the top right, we recognize a farmer's hut, the roof of which is thatched, clearly signaling the social difference.

The artist has undoubtedly drawn from a long tradition of rural scenes and motifs, as the marginal drawing of a farmer moving the plough handle in his effort to guide the ploughshare. As García-Tejedor comments, "Ploughing was a commonplace scene in the images of seasons in Antiquity on both sarcophagi and mosaics. The *Golf Book* maintains the classic composition of a labourer in the foreground and trees in the background, as in the images of months in late Antiquity."⁴³ Nevertheless, the tropological nature of this scene does not take away its realistic appearance, that is, its being grounded in an ordinary, rural experience typical of daily life. We could argue along the same lines and suggest that the urban settings, because of their dependence on artistic traditions, would not carry any value as to our attempt to grasp how that space was perceived in the sixteenth century (see, for instance, fol. 21v). Standard tropes are as fictional as realistic, for which reasons we must focus especially on minor details that reflect the repertoire available to an artist, borrowed from his own daily experiences. If they then conform to artistic traditions, we would not necessarily face an epistemological contradiction. After all, cutting grass and raking it in, or transporting the hay to the barn, cutting wood, butchering a pig, or baking bread belonged all to the standard activity by a farmer throughout the ages, and hence we find scenes

⁴³ García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (see note 41), 103.

depicting those motifs throughout the centuries.⁴⁴ Stereotypical iconography does not necessary diminish its value as a reflection of the history of mentality and of everyday life.

Most importantly, however, as the *Golf Book* illustrates as well, rural space was not really that far removed from urban and courtly space, which comes nicely through in the very first illumination on fol. 1r, presenting a bishop in all his regalia, standing in the middle of a meadow, holding his crosier in his left hand, and a closed book in his right hand. We see the Virgin Mary, holding her child, standing on the book, which informs us about the allegorical significance of this illustration. However, in the historiated frame we witness an intensive hunt scene, with three men already circling a boar, one ready to shoot his arrow, the other preparing his spear for the deadly thrust, and the third blowing his horn to attract the other hunters. Striking realism and allegorical approaches intimately interact with each other here, making this introductory painting into such a remarkable example of the basic processes generally pursued by the artists of *Books of Hours*. There was no chance for them to achieve the probably desired goal to create an illustrated book for private devotion without anchoring it somehow in the reality of their time. In this regard rural space emerged as a significant dimension, reflecting, on the one hand, how much people in the late Middle Ages were always exposed to and lived with farmers and their families, and, on the other, the natural tendency to spiritualize and allegorize agricultural and natural settings. Even religious themes, such as Christ's crucifixion (fol. 10v), could no longer be presented without some critical background, such as here the space of Mount Golgotha.

Nevertheless, the great interest in rural space in these *Books of Hours* emerge as one of the most critical features, underscoring in multiple fashion the importance of that world and its population for late-medieval society at large. Neither the artists nor their patrons would have devoted so much attention to the peasants, their housing and activities, and to the natural background — meadows, woods, fields, valleys, rivers, lakes, pastures, and orchards — if these would have been unwelcome. Of course, we are not dealing with central motifs, and the rural space certainly remained a minor element for the background or frame, but we can definitely affirm that the social spheres were not as strictly separated from each other in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age as we might have assumed.

The *Books of Hours* prove to be powerful counter-examples. This is not to deny that the artists clearly indicated what the differences to the nobility were: "lower ranking people work, and their anatomy and gestures are coarser whilst the nobility and members of the aristocracy watch them or enjoy themselves, for these

⁴⁴ García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (see note 41), 125.

manuscripts were produced for the highest classes of society."⁴⁵ This coarseness in the peasants' features and behavior, however, did not necessarily make the artists depict them altogether as ugly, evil, or detestable. Those who hold the money always make sure that they are presented as or can portray themselves as more beautiful, educated, and refined than those on the lower social level.

However, as Simon Bening demonstrated through his miniature paintings, there was no shame associated with being a peasant, and as long as those farmers expressed their humility and subordination, performing the jobs which were expected from them, the artists had no problem portraying them in an almost idyllic fashion.

As we can now confirm, behind the traditional iconography in these valuable and impressive *Books of Hours* we discover a social world which has always remained silent, if not mute, and did not find any significant measures to express itself or to find anyone willing to portray it in a more realistic mode. These miniature artists, though obviously following older styles, models, and visual trends, opened windows toward the rural population, projecting them as integral members of the same society, even though on a lower social level. As Wilhelm Hansen observes, contrasting early and high with late medieval art, "Die statische Ruhe sakraler Kunst weicht Genreszenen voller Aktivitäten, wie sie sich im realen Leben abspielen, und an die Stelle sinnbildhafter Überhöhungen tritt die scharf blickende Beobachtung der nüchternen Wirklichkeit" (The static tranquility of sacred art gives room to genre images filled with activities as they took place in real life, and symbolic representation is substituted by the observation of sober reality).⁴⁶

We might also entertain the notion that the creators of these *Books of Hours*, especially of the *Golf Book*, delighted in adding hilarious, facetious, that is, everyday scenes, including peasants and their wives, children, animals, birds, and objects, thereby alleviating temporarily the intensity of the religious theme pursued in these books. Although we also witness from time to time urban spaces, court settings, the sections with the Calendars are dominated by images reflecting rural space. This was, to be sure, not the norm in late-medieval book illustrations. Much depended on the specific themes and contents, such as when we turn, for instance, to the famous *Bible Moralisée* created by the Limbourg brothers for the Duke of Berry sometime after 1405. Here we are confronted with a host of images illustrating specific aspects and episodes in the Bible, but there is very little interest in elaborating on the social, naturalistic context or background. We commonly observe some hills and mountains, lakes and rivers, at times dotted by towns

⁴⁵ García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (see note 41), 24.

⁴⁶ Hansen, *Kalenderminiaturen der Stundenbücher* (see note 1), 41.

nestled in the background, but the comparison with the *Books of Hours* would just not do justice to the latter.⁴⁷

However, even within the large corpus of this genre we have to look carefully to identify specific examples where the rural space emerges more noticeably. Many *Books of Hours*, as splendidly as they might be decorated and embellished with marvelous *interieurs*, do not grant any room to rural space and contend themselves with biblical scenes with rather general, topological backgrounds or settings.

A good example proves to be the one created for Mary of Burgundy (1465–1482), a most powerful noble lady, but who died when she was only twenty-five years of age. The greatest contributions to this *Book of Hours* came from the Masters Nicolas Spierinc and Liévin van Lathem, but we can assume that a whole team of calligraphers and painters was also involved. As is so often the case in late-medieval marginal drawings, the frames teem with images of birds, strawberries, sometimes small monsters, leaves and vines, tendrils and flowers, once a frog (fol. 125v), but the artists never explored rural space in its concrete terms.⁴⁸ This phenomenon makes the specimens discussed above so remarkable and noteworthy because in the majority of cases the artists focused primarily on the biblical context and created fanciful visual contexts that reflected little of the rural space that we have discussed above.⁴⁹

According to the biblical account, certain agricultural events were intimately connected with the spiritual phenomenon, which invited the late-medieval artists to experiment with ever new variations of those themes, such as reaping and making wine.⁵⁰ But this does not prepare us for sometimes extraordinarily vivacious and lively scenes, such as the Annunciation to the Shepherds in the *Hours of the Virgin* (ca. 1450, Bruges), in which the shepherds break out in jubilant dance, holding one another's hands, and one of them blowing his flute in response to the angel's news. The artists projected a scene of utmost joyfulness and presented the figures in very positive light, well dressed, well-mannered, and virtually comparable to noble characters, perhaps distinguished from them only by the monochrome simplicity of their clothing.

⁴⁷ Eberhard König and John Lowden, *La Biblia Moralisée de los Limbourg: De los Hermanos Limbourg a Georges Trubert* (Valencia: Patrimonio Ediciones, 2010). Here I likewise consulted the facsimile copy held by Special Collections in the University of Arizona Library.

⁴⁸ *Das Stundenbuch der Maria von Burgund: Codex Vindobonensis 1857 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, commentary by Franz Unterkircher. *Glanzlichter der Buchkunst*, 3 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1993).

⁴⁹ For a good selection of individual folio pages from a variety of *Books of Hours*, kept in the British Library, London, see Backhouse, *Illumination from Books of Hours* (see note 7).

⁵⁰ Wieck, *Time Sanctified* (see note 14), 75.

The herd of sheep before them seems highly curious, since several of the animals look up and flock together. A tall waddled fence borders the pasture from the river and the hilly landscape in the background, where a well-built structure dots the landscape. There is no other way but to identify this scene as idyllic, even though it focuses on the shepherds only.⁵¹ Another astounding example, although hardly visible, comes to our attention in the same *Hours of the Virgin*, in the scene depicting the Entombment of Christ (fol. 46v). Although the focus rests on the tomb and on Christ's dead body, the eye is allowed to wander out of the enclosed room (tiled floor and arched wall) into the distance where a city with many towers and church spires rises before the dark sky. But next to it, on the slope, we detect an astonishing representation of agriculture, with many fields situated next to each other, all surrounded by green fences.

Instead of projecting the usual bland landscape or farmland, here the artist took care to reflect on the concrete situation with individual peasants making sure that their own property was clearly marked and separated from their neighbors.⁵² The delicate patterns of the tiles upon which the sarcophagus rests finds its parallel in the arrangement of the fields. In other words, the biblical event in the foreground was not to be presented in an idealized space without any realistic grounding. The viewer could identify with the scene because the context was borrowed from the contemporary world, which includes a river, the above mentioned hill, and the splendid city.

If we compare this image with the one depicting the Martyrdom of Dennis, Eleutherius, and Rusticus in the *Book of Hours* by the Master of the Harvard Hannibal (Paris, 1420s), we recognize how much that little patch of farmland in the previous illumination marked a new beginning. Here we recognize only the traditional craggy hills with no vegetation, except for a group of three trees growing on one of the rocks behind the scene. The decapitation takes place in a bland green field, where a few herbs and flowers raise their heads. The background is occupied by fortress-like structure, and the sky, as usual, is painted in dark blue, dotted with yellow stars.⁵³

The craggy but very unrealistic mountains are omnipresent in *Books of Hours*, and they surface even in images reserved for scenes near the coastline, such as St. Louis's arrival before Damietta in the *Belles Heures* of Jean, Duke of Berry (fol. 173r).⁵⁴ After all, the primary purpose of *Books of Hours* consisted of religious

⁵¹ Wieck, *Time Sanctified* (see note 14), 81, pl. 21.

⁵² Wieck, *Time Sanctified* (see note 14), 87, pl. 27.

⁵³ Wieck, *Time Sanctified* (see note 14), 142, p. 34.

⁵⁴ Millard Meiss and Elizabeth H. Beatson, *The Belles Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry. The Cloisters, the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). Similarly, on fol. 164v, where St. Eustace loses his sons, and on fol. 170r, where St. Anthony of Padua stills a storm, the green and the brown mountains in the background are nothing but stock elements.

instruction and supporting the individual pious person to perform the hours of the liturgy in the privacy of his or her home. Nevertheless, when we discover most realistic nature scenes, focusing on rural space, we can be certain that we are confronting a new awareness about the real environment into which the religious scene is situated.⁵⁵ Rural space, then, to state it most clearly, could not be ignored or neglected, not even by the highest ranking members of late-medieval society, and there was no real need for it or a desire to do so. After all, the religious phenomena depicted here often occur in the countryside and involve peasants, their wives, shepherds, children, farmhands, and maids. A final example to illustrate this observation may be taken from *The Visconti Hours*, commissioned by Giangaleazzo Visconti and created/written before 1395. On fol. BR 2v we see Joachim sitting in a wilderness setting, disregarding the herdsmen beneath him. Edith W. Kirsch offers the following summary of the pictorial details: "A gesticulating shepherd, wearing one gray and one black shoe, crosses his legs and twists his right arm to hold the staff on which he leans. At his feet a dog lies fast asleep. Seated in the ravine which divides the miniature is a second herdsman, barefoot and muscular, but like Joachim, bearded . . . The only man-made shelter in Joachim's wilderness is the thatched-roofed shed at the peak of the crag behind him."⁵⁶

Neither the rocks nor the pasture, neither the herdsmen nor the trees really surprise us, but the appearance of cows in this context proves to be rather innovative. The artist added a most curious element, which reveals the extent to which the rural existence had to be considered even in the presence of such a holy figure as Joachim. One of the cows is bothered by a fly, and tries to chase it away with the help of its tail. Next to him, on another cow a second fly has landed, but this does not distract the animal from his grazing activity. As Kirsch correctly remarks, "Perhaps aware of the novelty of this detail, the artist painted these insects disproportionately large."

Otherwise, however, the gold-colored sky and the typologically easily recognizable rocks take us back to more traditional illuminations in *Books of Hours*. The only other scene where rural space is allowed to enter the pictorial program

⁵⁵ For further examples and studies, see Eberhard König, *Das Berliner Stundenbuch der Maria von Burgund und Kaiser Maximilian: Handschrift 78 B 12 im Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz*. With contributions by Fedja Anzelewsky, Bodo Brinkmann, and Frauke Steenbock (Lachen am Zürichsee: Coron Verlag Monika Schoeller & Co., 1998); Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours* (London: The British Library; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Eberhard König, *Die Belles Heures des Duc de Berry: Sternstunden der Buchkunst* (Luzern: Faksimile Verlag; Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2004).

⁵⁶ *The Visconti Hours*, National Library, Florence. [Introductions and commentary by] Millard Meiss and Edith W. Kirsch (New York: G. Braziller [1972]), no page number, section "Plates and Commentaries," BR 2v.

is, quite fittingly, the Nativity on fol. LF 11r,, below which the artist (Belbello da Pavia) added The Annunciation. Remarkably, the shepherds are presented in a densely wooded area, the central person not even paying attention to the angels, bending his head down, covered in a hood, sleeping. The undergrowth appears to be so thick that the sheep are even covered by branches. Neither the forest nor the animals make a realistic impression, but we recognize the artist's serious attempt to convey the rurality, if we may say so, of Christ's beginning, being born to his mother in a cow shed, while simple shepherds outside are granted the status of being the first external witnesses. This is, of course, very much in line with the biblical account, but this artist took the next step to include specific elements shedding more light on the world of the peasants than this would have ever been possible in the early or high Middle Ages.

As topological as this scene proves to be, and as much as many of the images discussed above confirm the model which they all follow in one way or the other, the illustrations to the *Books of Hours* quite often still give way to the newly discovered fascination exerted by the rural space and openly admit its significance both in purely factual and spiritual terms. In this regard we might have identified a remarkable marker of the emerging modern age in which nature and the rural environment finally gained the recognition which they still enjoy today. Behind the religious content, and within the gamut of typological elements so representative of the calendar imagery, we notice in this outstanding book genre the growing impetus to incorporate elements of the natural world and to allow the work being performed by farmers to be accepted as worthwhile for the artist's eye as well.

We could certainly not claim that the *Books of Hours* indicate a straightforward and artistically bold idealization of rural space, or the glorification of the peasant population—far from it. Nevertheless, in analyzing the genre by itself in a comparative fashion, we undoubtedly recognize the opening up of the themes possible and permissible for the late-medieval artists, obviously because their motifs also met their patrons' interests. It would, of course, still take hundreds of years until Romantic painters and others shifted the value system in favor of naive nature, but here in the *Books of Hours* we can already recognize the budding interest in rural space where religious events from the biblical past and the history of the early Church could be powerfully depicted. Within the spectrum of typologically predetermined images—trees, meadows, farmers plowing, sowing, reaping, etc., animals, lakes and rivers—we discover, after all, a definite fascination with and interest in rural space as a meaningful stage of human activities.

Our conclusions would certainly find a number of confirmations if we compared our miniature images in these *Books of Hours* with the art commonly identified as the early Renaissance primarily in Italy. The famous painting by Piero della

Francesca depicting St. John baptizing Christ (ca. 1440–1450; London, National Gallery), for instance, provides considerable information about the natural world, here populated by trees, bushes, grass, and flowers, but they are nothing but standard decorations. In Benozzo Gozzoli's painting showing the arrival of the Three Magi (ca. 1459–1461; Florence, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi), typologically standardized rock formations, trees conforming to Renaissance norms, and some general vistas toward hilly landscape in the background dominate the panel, altogether leaving us rather disappointed. Jan van Eyck's famous altar triptych in the Ghent cathedral St. Bavo (1432) includes much natural landscape, so it seems, with throngs of people approaching the centrally located altar, upon which the *agnus dei* is standing, from all four corners, but at closer analysis we recognize mostly formulaic elements copied from model books, while the natural details so characteristic of images for the Calendars in *Books of Hours* are almost not present.

Of course, the artists' growing willingness to incorporate nature belongs to some of the highlights of the early Renaissance, such as illustrated by Geertgen tot Sint Jans's painting of John the Baptist (1485–1490; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz), or Hieronymus Bosch's *Ship of Fools* (after 1490; Paris, Musée National du Louvre). But the dominating symbolic interpretation of the critical components within the rural space continues to play a huge role. We could, of course, not radically claim that the natural elements depicted in the *Books of Hours* reflect completely different attitudes and ideas about the natural environment, irrespective of the ongoing employment of pictorial formulas. After all, the predominantly private character of this devotional genre obviously invited the artists to experiment more with such details than in their larger pieces, officially commissioned, and serving public representational purposes.⁵⁷

Broadly speaking we can certainly agree with Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, although they draw their essential material from the world of the Old French *fabliaux*. They convincingly argue that despite a considerable degree of playfulness, late-medieval authors and artists turned their attention to social reality and began to integrate, more than ever before, rural elements, i.e., especially members of the rural communities, as protagonists and side figures in their works. Even archeology and related disciplines confirm that we know increasingly more about the rural world since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both because it had in fact gained a stronger position within the context of medieval society in economic and political terms and because farm work, the

⁵⁷ The number of relevant studies on Renaissance art is legion, but here I have drawn from Manfred Wundram, *Frührenaissance von Masaccio bis Bosch. Malerei des Abendlandes* (Berlin, Darmstadt, and Vienna: C. A. Koch's Verlag Nachf., n. y. [ca. after 1977]).

peasant as a social group, and nature as part of the everyday environment gained in importance.⁵⁸

For instance, both in Langland's *Piers the Plowman* and in the slightly later *The Plowman and Death* by Johannes of Tepl (ca. 1400) the critical issues in life are reflected by the allegorized farmer, not by a knight or a courtier. The evidence of the *Books of Hours* confirms this observation and adds many new perspectives both in aesthetic and material terms. The artists certainly still reflected a highly naive approach to their natural environment, but they definitely affirmed the value of the animals, trees, bushes, flowers, birds, rocks, and a myriad of other natural objects all by themselves. This innovative approach, a kind of landmark of a coming paradigm shift, finds much support in contemporary literature. Gillian Rudd thus remarks, with regard to *Piers the Plowman*, "Langland links the search for a right way to live with moments of acute observations, much of which . . . consists of straightforward appreciation of, and sheer delight in, the natural world."⁵⁹ This fully applies to the *Books of Hours* as well in various degrees and levels of intensity.

The *Macclesfield Psalter* from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, acquired by the Fitzwilliams Museum, Cambridge only in 2004, even though it is not specifically a *Book of Hours*, provides valuable insight into the emergence of this 'ecocritical' perspective in the late Middle Ages.⁶⁰ The artist/s was or were obviously only allowed to add marginal drawings or to decorate the often most fantastic initials. So we do not face any large-scale images of natural scenes in this book. However, the plethora of natural elements scattered throughout the pages is just staggering, yet not untypical of late-medieval book illustrations, such as in the case of the *Luttrell Psalter*.⁶¹ The *Macclesfield Psalter* would require a detailed study all by itself; hence suffice it here to highlight just a few elements that might have paved the way for future artists to elaborate in full scale highly detailed rural sceneries in the *Books of Hours*.

On fol. 76r, for instance, a huge snail approaches a knight from the left who tries to defend himself with a long spear, on which a snake is coiled. On fol. 77r a farmer is driving a plow across his field, pulled by two horses, while a female person, perhaps his wife, stands on the cart holding a long staff with a whip at the end. On fol. 81v a beautiful bird with red and blue plume (perhaps a finch) is perched on the bottom shaft of the initial letter, apparently drawn from nature. On

⁵⁸ Alexandre-Bidon and Lorcin, *Le quotidien des fabliaux* (see note 16), 285–88.

⁵⁹ Rudd, *Greenery* (see note 16), 201.

⁶⁰ Stella Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008).

⁶¹ Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Michelle P. Brown, *The World of the Luttrell Psalter* (London: British Museum, 2006); *The Luttrell Psalter: A Facsimile*, commentary by Michelle P. Brown (London: British Library, 2006).

fols. 151r and 152r we recognize rabbits who assume human functions, in the first scene jousting in a knightly manner, sitting on horses, and then a funeral procession. Many times floral and foliage motifs add considerably to the rich fabric of aesthetic features, such as on fols. 1v, 13r, 47r, and 42r. Most shockingly, on fol. 68r a man falls backwards, horrified by a giant skate (belonging to the family of rays) floating toward him, while a monstrous animal with webbed feet and a short beak bites a long twig, completely absorbed by this activity. But then we also discover a naked urinating putto, while a grotesque figure holds a cup for his urine (fol. 236r).

The magic of the illumination program rests in the unsuspected appearance of natural details, such as a man shooting an arrow toward an owl on fol. 36r (see also fol. 91r). Crane-like birds and ducks (see fols. 93v and 94v) populate this psalter as much as rabbits that have assumed, reflecting a topsy-turvy world, the role of hunters, using knights as their horses (fol. 115v; cf. also 116r, with two rabbits all by themselves, while on fol. 124r a greyhound is chasing a rabbit; and on fol. 143v a monk riding on a monstrous creature aims his arrow at a rabbit sitting in a distance, outside of the initial). On fol. 162v a fox has just caught a rooster—obviously a borrowing from the fable tradition—whereas on fol. 193v a man has caught a stag with mighty antlers, using a strong rope, unless we are supposed to read this as a hunting scene in which the animal serves as a guide substituting for a horse or a tracking dog.

Overall, the playfulness and irreverence of these marginal drawings dominate the scenes, and yet we recognize a growing fascination with detailed depictions of animals, fowl, and all kinds of odd creatures, mostly monstrous. Stella Panayotova explains them as reflections of a new approach to preaching and religious didacticism in the late Middle Ages because “Theologians, rhetoricians and preachers relaxed their harsh opposition to monstrosities, spicy stories, scandalous images, secular musicians and actors as they saw the educational value of entertainment and its potential for the cure of souls.”⁶²

From an ecocritical perspective, we recognize here a burgeoning interest also in the natural world, and as soon as the genre of the *Books of Hours* gained in status and popularity, the artistic models as developed in the *Luttrell Psalter* and the

⁶² Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter* (see note 60), 14; see also Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge* (see note 33); *Prayers in Codex: Books of Hours from Renaissance France*, ed. Martina Bagnoli (Baltimore, MD: The Walters Art Museum, 2009); *Das Stundenbuch aus Poitiers in der Lissabonner Stiftung Gulbenkian: Begleitband zur Faksimile-Ausgabe des Ms. L.A. 135 Museu Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa*, ed. Eberhard König (Simbach a. Inn: Pfeiler, 2009); Eberhard König, *Das Pariser Stundenbuch an der Schwelle zum 15. Jahrhundert: die Heures de Joffroy und weitere unbekannte Handschriften* (Ramsen, Switzerland: Tenschert, 2011); *Das Da Costa-Stundenbuch: vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe der Handschrift MS M.399 aus The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Codices selecti, 116* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, vol. 1 [facsimile] 2010; vol. 2 [documentation] 2009; vol. 3 [commentary] 2010).

Macclesfield Psalter were readily available for a fully-fledged development on a large scale. After all, in the late Middle Ages nature, that is, the natural environment forced itself upon man's consciousness and gained in relevance for the arts, literature, philosophy, and theology in unforeseen fashion characterizing most dramatically the new interaction between people and their environment. While the psalter illuminations and those in other religious books give us only a faint indication of what was to come, the *Books of Hours* are already the triumphant harbinger of late-medieval and early-modern ecocriticism in a dazzling aestheticizing manner.⁶³

In the *Fitzwilliam Book of Hours* from ca. 1500, containing the illuminations from four artists, foremost among them the Master of the *Dresden Prayer Book*, active from ca. 1470 to 1510, the first section with the calendar shows us, as was common, the typical scenes representative of each season during the year, most of them depicting rural activities (labors of the months), here disregarding a few urban settings.⁶⁴ On fol. 4r, for instance, the foreground is filled with idyllic elements, with a woman milking a cow and two shepherds tending to the sheep. In the background, barely open to the viewer because of the calendar leaf, the perspective extends to a wide ranging landscape, and only at the far end we observe, barely visible, a city. Great attention is paid to planting, cutting, and other regular work in the fields and in the forest. On fol. 6v, we also see in the background, which is quite unusual, how farmers hoist bales of hay into the attic of the barn, while a man and a woman in the foreground ready the hay and turn it over for further drying. Fol. 7r depicts the cutting of wheat, and on fol. 7v farmers put together and ready the sheaves of wheat for transportation. The artist/s regularly divide the images into two sections, with the major events happening at the bottom, while the top is filled with a large section of sky where swarms of birds are flying. Also noteworthy might be the image on fol. 11v,

⁶³ See also *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*. Introd. and commentaries by John Plummer (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1966); *The Rohan Book of Hours*, introd. and commentaries by Marcel Thomas, trans. from the French by Katherine W. Carson, introd. by Millard Meiss (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973). Here we come across a good number of charming small illustrations, but they continue to be rather schematic and little detailed, although the margins are also quite elaborately filled with unique realistic scenes, such as a man roasting pigs on a spit, fol. 83r. Cf. further *The Hastings Hours: A 15th-Century Flemish Book of Hours Made for William, Lord Hastings*, preface and commentary by D. H. Turner (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983); Janet Backhouse, *The Bedford Hours* (London: British Library, 1990); Roger S. Wieck, *The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*, with essays by Lawrence R. Poos, Virginia Reinberg, and John Plummer (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1988); see especially Wieck's essay "Calendar," 45–54.

⁶⁴ *The Fitzwilliam Book of Hours MS 1058–1975*. Commentary by Stella Panayotova (London: The Folio Society, 2009). For a discussion of the calendar, see Panayotova, 71–77. She also offers the relevant remarks on the signs of the zodiac, which are also essential elements in *Books of Hours*, constituting the critical links between macro- and microcosm.

showing us a farmer on a market selling his sows to a merchant or butcher. Finally, the last page of the calendar depicts a cold day in the city with snow flakes falling down. All the people are huddled up, only a child, led by his mother, does not wear a headgear and has no gloves on. This is a nice match with the first two images presenting a couple in their house, with the man warming his hands and feet at the fire (fol. 1r), and then with a group of young people riding in a horse-drawn sleigh through the snow, obviously enjoying this leisurely activity.

Apart from the calendar, the rest of the *Fitzwilliam Book of Hours* is beautifully illuminated. The border vignettes display a wealth of flowers, strawberries, insects, birds, and sometimes also grotesque figures, such as a red-hooded man stuck in the shell of a snail (fol. 78r), all very similar to those in the *Dresden Prayer Book* from ca. 1470. As Stella Panayotova comments with regard to the latter, which also applies to the present *Book of Hours*: "Through close observation of nature the Master of the Dresden Prayer Book simulated spatial depth and atmospheric effects that were emulated by the next generation of Flemish illuminators, notably Simon Bening, who created some of the most ambitious Calendar-cycles still in existence."⁶⁵

Little discussed, yet proving to be a perfect and final example for our argument, is the *Hastings Hours* from ca. 1480, a Flemish product, perhaps influenced by the school of Hans Memling in Bruges. The wide margins of its pages are filled with flowers, butterflies, fruits, insects (such as dragonflies), and birds, all painted most lovingly and meticulously copied from reality. The artist/s must have paid close attention to nature studies, otherwise he or they would not have been able to copy those elements in such an accurate manner.⁶⁶ Of course, the religious symbolism continues to play a major role here, as we would not expect in any other way, considering the genre itself, but it begins to be paired with this intriguing interest in the specific details in nature and in everyday human existence. The rural space staked its own right in these masterpieces of late-medieval genre, gloriously illuminated by some of the best artists of their time.⁶⁷ At closer analysis we can

⁶⁵ Panayotova, *Commentary* (see note 64), 75. See also Thomas Kren, "Landscape as Leitmotif: A Reintegrated Book of Hours Illuminated by Simon Bening," *Illuminating the Book: Makers and Interpreters: Essays in Honour of Janet Backhouse*, ed. Michelle P. Brown and Scot McKendrick (London: British Library, and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 209–32. For the exchanges among artists and the learning process, see id. and Maryan W. Ainsworth, "Illuminators and Painters: Artistic Exchanges and Interrelationships," *The Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, ed. Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, and London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2003–2004), 35–57.

⁶⁶ *The Hastings Hours* (see note 63). Each page is dominated by a specific color of the flowers, so red, blue, or yellow. But at times there are also green leaves (fol. 71r), or a veritable flower bouquet (fol. 73b).

⁶⁷ There would be many more examples of *Books of Hours* that could be discussed, and the collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, particularly deserves mention here. See, for instance, the

easily find illustrations for a wide range of many different rural activities, then animals, housing, foodstuff, plants, tools, buildings, gardens, butchering, landscapes, and the like. As much as we might tend to view the Middle Ages only through the lense of aristocratic literature, clerical texts, or legal documents, the evidence of the *Books of Hours* confirms the extent to which the rural world was, after all, on many people's minds since all existence depended on the production of foodstuff.⁶⁸

The *Books of Hours* prove to be a highly exciting genre from the late Middle Ages since they provide such far-reaching insights into the awareness of rural space at that time. Our ecocritical reading proves to be a far-reaching method to learn much more about that time.⁶⁹

incredibly richly illuminated Ms. 62 (ca. 1445–1450). For a careful description, see Montague Rhoses James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum with Introduction and Indices* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1895), 156–74. See also the contribution to the present volume by Lia B. Ross who also includes a discussion of *Books of Hours*, though then she expands the scope of her analysis considerably.

⁶⁸ For an excellent collection of individual scenes in many different *Books of Hours*, see now *Das leuchtende Mittelalter*, ed. Jacques Dalarun. Trans. from the French into German by Birgit Lamerz-Beckschäfer, 3rd ed. (2002; Darmstadt: Primus, 2011).

⁶⁹ I would like to express my thanks to my dear colleague Christopher R. Clason, Oakland University, MI, for a careful reading of this article and for providing me with helpful comments. I also greatly appreciate the comments by Stella Panayotova, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Chapter 16

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The Tame Wilderness of Princes: Images of Nature in Exemplars of *Books of Hours* and in the *Livre du Cœur d'amour épris* of King René of Anjou

In a famous passage of *The World as Will and Idea* Schopenhauer illustrated the concept of the sublime by way of a series of images that awaken in the human mind a profound state of exaltation mixed with fear. From the contemplation of the unbroken horizons of boundless prairies to the sensation of being engulfed by the vastness of the universe, the sublime is linked with ever growing intensity to aspects of wild nature.

Nature convulsed by a storm; the sky darkened by black threatening thunder-clouds; stupendous, naked, overhanging cliffs, completely shutting out the view; rushing, foaming torrents; absolute desert; the wail of the wind sweeping through the clefts of the rocks. Our dependence, our strife with hostile nature, our will broken in the conflict, now appears visibly before our eyes. Yet, so long as the personal pressure does not gain the upper hand, but we continue in aesthetic contemplation, the pure subject of knowing gazes unshaken and unconcerned through that strife of nature, through that picture of the broken will, and quietly comprehends the Ideas even of those objects which are threatening and terrible to the will. In this contrast lies the sense of the sublime.¹

Even if such extreme sentiments, acceptable at the height of Romanticism, sound alien today, nevertheless echoes of those concepts have remained current enough in post-Romantic art as to open up the artist's canvas to untamed nature as its sole

¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (1883–1886; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), 217.

subject.² And modern enjoyment of the wild is so appreciated today that it is becoming a mark of veritable touristic elitism. This attitude toward pristine nature is apparently motivated by “a sense of its inherent difference [. . .] something deemed to be apart from the ordinary domain of the human; its specialness as a region is inherent to its remoteness,” and precisely because of its remoteness it is believed to possess redemptive qualities.³

It may seem odd that people living in the medieval past could have responded quite differently to an idea that Schopenhauer assumed to be innate and shared by humankind. But in fact it would be challenging to find examples from late medieval art or literature that reflect such an intense mixture of longing for and fear of an extreme personal experience in relation to nature. Almost a century ago Huizinga recognized a fundamental difference between the Romantic and medieval view of nature in the course of his lengthy discussion of late medieval esthetics in northern Europe. Within this culture “the feeling for nature was not free, neither was the manner of expressing it. Love of nature had taken the form of the pastoral and was therefore controlled by sentimental and aesthetic conventions.”⁴

Right from the start he made the significant observation that the vast majority of what is left of the artistic expression of that period was dictated by the taste of princely patrons and their dependants.

The great artists generally worked for other circles than those of the devout townspeople. The art of the brothers Van Eyck and of their followers, though it sprang up in municipal surroundings and was fostered by town circles, cannot be called a bourgeois art. The court and the nobility exercised too powerful an attraction. Only the patronage of princes permitted the art of miniature to raise itself to the degree of artistic refinement which characterizes the work of the brothers of Limburg and the artists of the Hours of Turin.⁵

It is indeed true, if disappointing, that what is left of late medieval art (a small sample of the whole, perhaps, but still remarkably abundant) either belonged to the highest ranks of the aristocracy (which included the upper ranks of the clergy) or was created within an environment that catered to their taste. The present chapter investigates late medieval attitudes towards wild nature as a source of

² See, for example, Cézanne’s paintings *Rocks at Fontainebleau* (1893) and *Rocks at l’Estaque* (1879–1882).

³ David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation*. Ashgate Studies in Childhood, 1700 to Present (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 11.

⁴ J(oh)an Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1919; New York, London: Doubleday, 1989), 292–93.

⁵ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 260. See also his discussion (128) of the aristocratic tastes of Philip of Artevelde, leader of the Flemish insurgents.

pure esthetic pleasure, as evidenced by selected pictorial examples that illustrate their tastes in natural landscapes. But having to search for clues exclusively within the aristocratic world, it is forced to frame its central question in more limited terms: did late medieval *princes* feel pure esthetic pleasure in being immersed in nature?

The diverse data on this apparently simple topic is far from easy to decipher. On the one hand there is the compelling image left by Lucien Febvre in his representation of court life in Renaissance France (certainly applicable to the previous centuries) of ruddy courtiers and ladies galloping across the countryside, daring harsh winds and rain to follow a royal court in perpetual motion.⁶ Then there are innumerable other testimonies from medieval art, literature, and the anecdotal evidence of chroniclers that the hunt was the paramount aristocratic pleasure.⁷ On the other hand the interpretation of this body of evidence may lead to ambiguous conclusions. Febvre himself suggests that nobles did not so much enjoy the peripatetic life of medieval and Renaissance courts as tolerate it stoically out of a sense of duty.⁸ And perhaps outdoor pastimes were not sought after in order to experience the wild, but for more utilitarian reasons such as training for war, affirmation of prerogatives, or display of skills to validate one's position within the peer group. In other terms, aristocrats could have been motivated by social, rather than esthetic, rewards.

On a practical level, the need to select a manageable sample of sources imposes a choice between literary and figurative sources. This, in turn, leads to a short review of Huizinga's analysis, in the course of which he highlighted both similarities and distinctions between the literary and figurative material on hand. The crux of his thesis was that late medieval poetry compared unfavorably with contemporary figurative art, a conclusion that he summarized with the incisive statement that one of the "fundamental traits of the mind of the declining Middle Ages is the predominance of the sense of sight, a predominance which is closely connected with the atrophy of thought."⁹

In particular he noted that the tendency to attribute equal importance to all details (very evident in the celebrated Flemish art of the period) fell flat when

⁶ Lucien Febvre, *Life in Renaissance France*, ed. and trans. Marian Rothstein (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 17–18.

⁷ For a discussion of an unusual aspects of this topic, see the chapter "Women at the Hunt: Developing a Gendered Logic of Rural Space in the Netherlandish Visual Tradition" by Martha Peacock in the present volume.

⁸ Febvre (*Life in Renaissance France* [see note 6], 19) states that nobles returned to their own domains as soon as possible and tried to spend at most one or two months a year following the peregrinations of the king.

⁹ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 284.

applied to poetry and degenerated into enumerations.¹⁰ As an example he quoted a passage from the *Livre des Quatre Dames*, a poem by Alain Chartier, who “in his day was held to be a great poet” to a level with Petrarch. In this poem Chartier describes a walk “aux champs” (in the country) on a spring morning, which he tries to render through an inventory of blooming trees, hopping rabbits, buzzing insects, and finally a list of colors (white, yellow, red, and violet) to suggest flowers.¹¹ The poet limits his canvas to superficial features and never achieves any lyrical intensity. Further, the most significant adjective that he produces is “doux” (mellow), that is a generic moral quality, not a descriptive one. Huizinga concluded that in an epoch of “pre-eminently visual inspiration [. . .] pictorial expression easily surpasses literary expression.”¹²

The author then endeavored to explain how a cultural environment that created a wealth of pictorial masterpieces could produce a poetry that was generally insipid, imitative, and shallow. But when he proceeded to examine the visual arts he switched easily from the subject of nature to that of humans: portraits, clothes and accessories, lavish interiors, and elegant urban exteriors. In these cases—he argued—the artists’ and patrons’ love for details did produce a pleasing visual effect, yet far from an inspiring one to the modern eye. The reason was that medieval theory had intellectualized the idea of beauty into one of harmonious proportions and formal perfection, and in so doing had substituted for beauty “the notions of measure, order and appropriateness” and reduced it to “the sensation of light and splendour.”¹³

Hence the art and the literature of the fifteenth century, though born of the same inspiration and the same spirit, inevitably produce on us quite different effects. [Yet both] share the general and essential tendency of the spirit of the expiring Middle Ages: that of accentuating every detail, of developing every thought and every image to the end, of giving concrete form to every concept of the mind.¹⁴

Even in the great paintings of the period one finds exaggerated details in clothes and ornaments as artists satisfied their noble patrons’ “fondness for all that glitters,” depicting with loving precision their gaudy attire of soft velvets and stiff damasks overly-adorned with precious stones. The anthropocentric world of art, with its almost exclusive appreciation for what is built by human hands, is reflected in the backgrounds of religious paintings that indulge in minute details of “a town full of pointed gables and elegant belfries [. . .] a curved bridge

¹⁰ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 280.

¹¹ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 281–83.

¹² Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 294.

¹³ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 267, 269.

¹⁴ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 276–77.

swarming with groups of people.”¹⁵ In fact, in the figurative arts of the period it is rare to see a natural landscape that was not artificially composed as backdrop to a human scene.

In conclusion, late Gothic fondness for details was in evidence both in poetry (where nature could be depicted by itself, but within the confines of the pastoral) and painting (where nature was barely present as background to portraiture, at least in altarpieces and other monumental art). While this observation will turn out useful in the course of the present analysis, it is important not to forget Huizinga’s main argument that we are dealing with an era that emphasized images over the written word. Therefore the most meaningful sources for the present discussion are to be found in painted landscapes appearing within a textual context. Luckily, the late medieval period has preserved for posterity a relative abundance of this type of images in the illuminations of precious books.

This art, too, catered mainly to princes, and perhaps even more so than large-scale figurative art was tied to the patrons’ taste, being ancillary to texts that were read by their owners and their inner group. For this reason it can be viewed as a close reflection of the taste of the patrons rather than of the inspiration of the painter. In this type of art one can find a closer parallel to the peculiar perception of nature typical of the poetry of the period.

Huizinga did consider this art form in his study, and appreciated the charming results of some of its best exemplars: the illuminations of *Books of Hours*.¹⁶ These fashionable prayer books, most often made for aristocrats and royalty, were lavishly decorated with images of biblical events, contemporary seasonal activities, portraits of saints and sometime of the owner, and often bizarre pictures in the margins, which may or may not have been connected to the text of the page on which they were drawn.¹⁷ In these works the perception of nature in its exclusive

¹⁵ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, 270 (see note 4), 278.

¹⁶ For an in-depth discussion of *Books of Hours* and their depiction of rural scenes, see the chapter “Rural Space in Late Medieval *Books of Hours*: Book Illustrations as a Looking-Glass Into Medieval Mentality and Mirrors of Ecocriticism” by Albrecht Classen in the present volume.

¹⁷ It may be noted that in these works the northern figurative taste predominates. John Plummer, *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (New York: George Braziller, 1966?), 8 explains: “During the first four decades of the fifteenth century, illuminated manuscripts were produced in unprecedented numbers in the North, in particular in centers distributed roughly along a large geographical arc between Paris and Utrecht, and swinging through such places as Tournai, Ypres, Bruges, Ghent, and Brussels. [...] For Paris the most important manuscripts and the artists of their miniatures are widely known: The *Très Riches Heures de Jean de Berry* by the Limbourg brothers, Paul, Herman, and John Malouel, who came originally from Guelders; the Hours of the Maréchal de Boucicaut by an anonymous artist called simply the ‘Boucicaut Master’; two manuscripts, a Book of Hours and a Breviary, made for John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, by a miniaturist known thus as the ‘Bedford Master’; the *Grandes Heures de la Famille de Rohan* by the so-called Rohan Master. Less widely known are the miniaturists of Utrecht-Guelders and their masters.”

relation to human activities is quite evident. The *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry, one of the earliest and most famous *Book of Hours* of the fifteenth century, supplies a wealth of examples. The vignettes of farmers' life in the shadow of glittering castles that adorn the Calendar section of the book earned Huizinga's praise. In particular he admired the serene image of September "with the vintage in progress and the castle of Saumur, rising like a vision behind it," and of December with the "somber towers of Vincennes looming threateningly behind the leafless woods." Still, he fell short of attributing the inspiration for those scenes of farming activities to love of nature, as he noticed the dominant role of the castles over the fields.¹⁸

The history of the illuminations of this renowned work is significant because it confirms a remarkable continuity in the perception of natural landscape across generations. As Lillian Schacherl informs us, the first team of artists assigned to it consisted of the three Limbourg brothers, Paul (who was probably the master in charge), Herman, and Jean, natives of Nimwegen in the Duchy of Guelders. They were hired by the Duke of Berry to illustrate the *Belles Heures* (1408–1409) and immediately afterwards to start the *Très Riches Heures* (1410). But all three died still young in 1416 of unknown causes (possibly during an epidemic), leaving the work unfinished. Their patron also died in the same year and the book eventually passed to the house of Savoy, the family of his widow Bonne. In 1485 Duke Charles I of Savoy commissioned Jean Colombe, an illuminator living in Bourges, to complete the book, which Colombe did in his own style. The manuscript in the present state contains one hundred thirty-one miniatures exceptional in quality and originality (for example, they feature the first fully-fledged shadows cast by figures and objects).¹⁹

Among those are eleven vignettes of open landscapes associated with the months of the year in the Calendar portion (January is the exception as it portrays an indoors scene). February shows life on a farm: on a snowy landscape of soft white hills and a forest of denuded trees a well-dressed male figure is cutting wood, while a lonely muleteer travels a road leading to a village. The foreground is occupied by a fenced space enclosing a storage tower flanked by frozen beehives; a figure walking with his face protected against the cold; a barn where sheep are huddled together; and a courtyard where crows are feeding on grains. The picture is completed with a domestic scene on the left corner: an elegant female figure flanked by two servants, all sitting on a bench and warming their feet at a fire.²⁰

¹⁸ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 293–94.

¹⁹ Lillian Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures: Behind the Gothic Masterpiece* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997), 29–36, 51.

²⁰ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 46–47. Her interpretation of the various human figures

March features the Duke's fortress at Lusignan in Poitou dominating enclosed fields of pale green being plowed by oxen and planted by farmers. April illustrates a betrothal ceremony among aristocrats, dressed in sumptuous clothes on a manicured lawn of solid delicate green delimited by stylized trees; in the background a river and a white castle (either Dourdan or Pierrefonds) can be discerned. A group of aristocrats (perhaps the same betrothal party after the wedding) are depicted in May as they take a leisurely ride in the country, the majority of them appropriately wearing green. The huge castle in the background has been identified with the Palais de la Cité in Paris or the Duke's chateau of Riom. An intense green forest partially screens it, while the colorful riders on bedecked horses and accompanied by dogs dominate the foreground. The quaint lawn barely sketched at the edge of the picture is a uniform green surface sprinkled with verdant and flowery bushes.²¹

June, July, and August return to the theme of agriculture. In the image of June the Duke's Hôtel de Nesle in Paris is depicted with extreme details, with its blue roofs and white walls and the Seine flowing below, but the rest of the city has disappeared, leaving only a peaceful green field being mowed by farmers while women rake the grass and pile it into hay stacks. In July farmers are again at work in the shadow of a ducal palace (this one on the Clain River in Poitiers). The river flows between a golden field being mowed by peasants and a green pasture dotted by trees where sheep are being sheared. August is the only miniature that portrays both aristocrats and peasant in the same picture, but appropriately separated by their activities and also physically by the Juine River that intersects the scene. In the fields outside the Duke's castle of Étampes peasants are harvesting and loading carts, while some refresh themselves by swimming in the silvery waters (the depiction of swimmers and their reflections is quite novel). The foreground portrays a group of nobles hawking on a vast emerald meadow.²²

September was left unfinished with only its background depicting the splendid castle of Saumur near Angers. Jean Colombe completed the foreground seventy years later for his Savoyard master with the addition of vintners harvesting grapes.²³ Despite the difference in style (more robust with the later illuminator) the picture is well assimilated within the rest of the Calendar scenes and shows a remarkable continuity in taste both for illuminators and patrons. October features

is as follows: the wood cutter represents the farmer, the female figure warming her feet at the fire his wife, and the two figures seated next to her (visibly naked under their aprons) her servants. Of course, other interpretations are possible. The image can be viewed at http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Les_Tr%C3%A8s_Riches_Heures_du_duc_de_Berry_f%C3%A9vrier.jpg.

²¹ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 51–57.

²² Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 58–60.

²³ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 66–67.

the king's residence of the Louvre in the background, while in the foreground a man sows seeds and another on horseback harrows a field where magpies are busy eating under the distant gaze of a scarecrow dressed like an archer. For November Colombe depicted the traditional activity of harvesting acorns: in the background pigs are feeding in the forest, watched by swineherds, while another swineherd strikes a theatrical pose in the foreground.²⁴ Behind the straight and orderly grove of trees is a blue-tinged mountain landscape, a color which suffuses with magic an otherwise realistic rendition of the topography of Savoy.²⁵

December is probably the work of Paul Limbourg and portrays the culmination of a boar hunt in the Bois-de-Vincennes (with the castle visible beyond the trees). The landscape here is wintry, with yellow leaves and stumps of cut trees in the foreground. This scene, alone among those of the Calendar, could be construed as the abandonment of the pastoral theme to portray wild violence: the boar is prostrate, mortally wounded or already dead, and the hounds have viciously thrown themselves on the prey (one of them foams at the mouth as a servant holds it back).²⁶ However, this is a wild scene by modern standards only. For medieval viewers this occurrence was commonplace, and it is safe to assume that a lack of feelings for the slaughtered wild beast could have been shared by both patron and painter. In general, Schacherl's comment that the Duke of Berry "wanted to see a world that was contented and entirely focused on himself" is quite fitting to this series of images.²⁷

The controlled world of agriculture is abandoned in the illustrations of biblical episodes. But as natural landscapes quit their familiar setting they also assume less importance in the overall scenes, and repetitions become more evident. For example, the *Visitation of St. Elizabeth* is set against a fairy-tale background of deep greens and blues with a beautiful city in the far right (probably Bourges), while the foreground is dominated by a strange, abstract, spiraling mountain that resembles an ice cream cone. The same mountain reappears in the *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, this time in pale green: a stream rises from it and pours into an incongruous marble fountain, then flows again from the fountain to a rivulet from which sheep are drinking.

The mountain resurfaces in the *Temptation of Christ* and in the *Meeting of the Magi*, along with other stylized rounded hills surmounted by castles. Both this last scene and the subsequent *Adoration of the Magi* suggest that the artist attempted to render an alien world complete with exotic animals, as he depicted camels and

²⁴ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 73–74.

²⁵ Whitley (*The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* [see note 3], 87) states that in film animation naturalistic landscapes are usually tinted blue when the intent is to suggest some magic quality.

²⁶ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 75–77.

²⁷ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 50.

even cheetahs (but these in a rather tame stance) to accompany the bearded men in fanciful oriental outfits.²⁸

The two most striking pictures of the series are almost completely monochromatic. The first, *Christ in Gethsemane*, may be the work of Paul alone, and depicts an entirely nocturnal scene. Under a deep blue sky studded with stars, among the silhouettes of trees, the crowd of sleeping disciples is barely visible in the foreground in the weak light of an upturned lantern. Christ's head, lit by an intense halo, is the only bright spot and the focus of the composition. The calm, intimate aura that pervades the picture produces an effect of subdued lyricism far from the powerful drama of Romantic landscapes. The second, the *Crucifixion* is entirely rendered in grisaille through soft shades of blue, orange and red, with the sun and moon both visible in the dark sky, to represent an eclipse.

No landscape to speak of appears in the scene: the three crosses, upright against the sky, and a silent crowd gathered around the central figures are all that is visible, with Christ's halo once again supplying the only source of light. In contrast, the *Deposition* takes place in full daylight, and is occupied entirely by human figures, with no attempt at rendering the background except as a uniform slate of green.²⁹ In general, these illuminations of outdoors scenes confirm the central role of the human presence and the preference for a familiar nature, even if situated in exotic settings.

Other examples of *Books of Hours* confirm that trend. The anonymous illuminator known as the Bedford Master was named after his masterpiece, the so-called *Bedford Hours* (now Additional MS 18850 in the British Library), a work of over twelve hundred illuminations that was acquired, but probably not commissioned, by John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford and regent of France after the death of his brother Henry V (the book was later adapted for the young King Henry VI). With this work the pastoral inspiration is especially successful in rendering animals in almost human attitudes. In fact, the Master displays such sensitivity in the portrayal of animals that he is believed to have started his career as illuminator of hunting manuals (his hand shows in the precious *Livre de Chasse* of Gaston Phébus Fount of Foix). In the *Bedford Hours* he perfects his artistry in depicting animals

²⁸ The images and the comment about Bourges are in Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19) 85–95, 114–15. I hesitate to attribute to biblical inspiration the medieval utilitarian view of nature (i.e., vegetal and animal worlds subordinate to man) given the intense naturalism of the patristic tradition, as in Saint Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Antony*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (Westminster, MD: The Newmann Press, 1950) taken up by medieval hagiographers such as Felix's *Life of St. Guthlac*, trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, London, New York, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1956). It seems more likely that, if anything, the "traditional" biblical view would provide the sanction for an ingrained social attitude rather than the motivation for the same.

²⁹ Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 100, 104–107.

scattered on pretty landscapes. For example, the *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (fol. 70v) in the Hours of the Virgin portrays sheep, dogs, and shepherds draped all over a grassy hill among flowery trees, and apparently sharing the same emotions, “from quiet repose to rapt attention.” The picture exhibits “a keen sense of nature and a benign sympathy for men and animals, extending even beyond the miniature into the dancing figures of the border.”³⁰

The complex illustration of *After the Flood* (fol. 16v) is dominated by the golden ark on the left upper corner and the new vineyards in the right lower corner. Among the receding waters that reveal submerged buildings and people, the land appears green and plentiful, and dotted with several species of animals from domestic to exotic (dromedary) and wild (lion, bear). The Master’s natural backgrounds are all quite cheery, regardless of the theme. The *Tower of Babel* (fol. 17v) is being erected under a deep blue starry sky, among meadows of vibrant green and yellow, smooth conical hills, and little groves of stylized flowering trees. A similar backdrop graces the *Visitation* (fol. 54v), *Christ in Prayer on Mount Olive* (fol. 208), and *Judas’s Kiss* (fol. 221v).

The last picture introduces a strange low bush with filamentous branches, which may have been an attempt at representing a tropical tree, and which recurs in other scenes. The Calendar miniatures of these *Hours* were apparently painted by a different artist and left incomplete. They are quite conventional: April (fol. 4) and May (fol. 5) show respectively a man carrying a leafy tree and walking on a lawn along a smooth blue river, and a falconer on horseback on a green lawn along a blue river, with a castle in the background.³¹

In some of the later *Books of Hours* a new feature makes a (rather timid) debut: a limited sample of wild scenery as a device to portray dramatically the presence of evil, and often coexisting with idyllic landscapes within the same picture. For instance, the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, Duchess of Guelders (dated circa 1440) contains exquisite illuminations by the anonymous artist known only as the Master of Catherine of Cleves. Despite his dramatic style and his developed sense of perspective and color (especially evident in his colorful skies in hues of orange and blue), he does not abandon the pastoral form even in the series of images dedicated to the lives and martyrdoms of saints.³² For example, in the scene *Saint*

³⁰ Eberhard König, *The Bedford Hours: The Making of a Medieval Masterpiece* (London: The British Library, 2007), 5, 11.

³¹ König, *The Bedford Hours* (see note 30), 15, 38, 58–59, 68–69, 120. The author explains (69) the reason for such variety in style within the same book: the project could be shared between *enlumineurs*, border decorators, and *historieurs*, painters of miniatures. It is likely that the different craftsmen responsible did not even work in the same workshop.

³² Maintaining a pleasant natural backdrop even to scenes of martyrdom seems to have been common. For example, see the idyllic background to the *Pietà* in a French Book of Hours, ca. 1450. Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca and London:

Michael Battling Demons the archangel stands with his sword drawn over defeated demons surrounded by a bright green meadow studded with flowers. Far behind him are two craggy barren hills gashed by flaming fissures to represent Hell, from which another demon emerges.

Likewise, Saint John the Baptist is conventionally portrayed against a wild background of rocks and caves (some of them surmounted by trees), but standing on a green flowery lawn. The *Martyrdom of Saint Erasmus* depicts the saint stretched on a pallet being disemboweled by two executioners who are stringing his intestines through a machine rotating two spindles. The backdrop (which may be the work of a different artist) consists of a soft blue sky, two rounded bare hills, and a pale green lawn. In the *Lapidation of Saint Stephen* the saint gently falls among his executioners on a delicate lawn dotted with flowers.³³

The viewer derives the impression that this artist (or artists, since there may have been more than one) followed his inspiration to create a sensuous, evocative natural setting whenever he could, and in his hands the pastoral evolves beyond clichés to achieve real sophistication, but still confined by the esthetic norms of the period. For example, in depicting *Saint Christopher Carrying the Infant Jesus* he places the saint in the foreground as he wades ashore carrying the infant who is blessing him. The two figures are surrounded by an “almost surrealistic” landscape: green-topped hills frame the scene; mirror-like waters reflect distant cliffs and fishermen standing in their boats; a few ripples made by jumping fish break the surface of the water; in the far distance microscopic ducks float among the reeds; and the orange sunset gives way to a deep blue night sky with gold stars and moon. But the artist is not content with the already rich scene, and adds two other figures to the composition. “On a ledge in the cliffs at one side, the traditional hermit ineffectually lights the saint’s way with a lantern. In the lower border, a man pushes and pulls at the gateway in which he stands, probably a depiction of Samson pulling down the gates of Gaza before carrying them off, a conventional parallel for Saint Christopher.”³⁴ It is an extremely skillful and evocative picture, yet upon analysis also a very busy one, typical of late Gothic art in its abundance of independent vignettes only loosely connected with the central scene. The effect of the whole, while quite attractive, is still of an artificially assembled scenery with humans at every level.

A similar concept of nature continues its dominance a generation later in the *Book of Hours* of Mary of Burgundy, daughter and heiress of Duke Charles the Bold

Cornell University Press, 2007), 213, Fig. 13–10. An exception to this rule is in images of Hell, but in this case it is a matter of imaginary landscape, not “nature” as such.

³³ Plummer, *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (see note 17), 8–9. The images listed belong to the so-called Morgan volume of the manuscript, and are found respectively at pp. 204, 208, 258, and 271.

³⁴ Plummer, *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (see note 17), 275. This image, too, is in the Morgan volume.

of Burgundy. The book, produced in the 1470s, was richly illustrated by a team of artists and is considered one of the masterpieces of the period. While its attribution is not certain, it is reputed to have belonged to a high personage of the Burgundian court, most likely a woman (some of the prayers use the feminine in referring to the supplicant), and perhaps with some English associations (a gift to Mary from her stepmother Margaret of York has been suggested).³⁵ Like others of its genre it contains a wealth of marginalia that realistically render isolated aspects of nature, for example, domestic and wild animals, birds, insects, and plants, all depicted with a loving hand. Even half-wild animals like monkeys, which were popular as pets, find a place here as their mischievous nature is portrayed in several drolleries with indulgent humor. And the Calendar section, like that of the *Heures* of Berry, depicts serene rural scenes of familiar seasonal activities confined within a limited space and dominated by humans and their artifacts.

This work contains also a few sparse images of wild, rocky scenery, but these are almost exclusively relegated to the passages of the Hours of the Virgin dedicated to the Passion of Christ. In four large illuminations, each occupying the greater part of a page, the artist visualizes the graceful buildings of Jerusalem receding into the distance while the foreground looms barren and inhospitable, a somber complement to the unfolding drama.³⁶ These landscapes are deliberately rendered savage because they serve as backdrop to scenes of violence, and are meant to elicit aversion in the reader, a technique encountered earlier only in the scene of *Saint Michael Battling Demons* in the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*.³⁷ The connection between stark nature and evil is maintained in the illustration accompanying the opening page of the Gospel of Saint John. The Evangelist is here conventionally depicted in the island of Patmos and tormented by the Devil who tries to steal his inkwell. The blackened, clawed monster at the left of the picture rises from an agitated sea framed by bleak rocks, while placid waters and graceful buildings form the backdrop to the saint and the protective angel.³⁸

It could be argued that the five images just mentioned in the *Hours of Mary of Burgundy* were naive attempts at inserting realistically the human characters in

³⁵ *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy: Codex Vindobonensis 1857*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, with commentary by Eric Inglis (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1995), 10–11, 14–16.

³⁶ The four images are respectively in *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy* (see note 35), 94v, 99v, 104v, 111v.

³⁷ In general, however, there seems to be no direct parallel between mountainous terrain and inhospitable nature. See the discussion about Dante's *dilettoso monte* and the vision of its biblical and classical predecessors, the sacred mountains Olympus and Helicon, in Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: a Study in Medieval Allegory* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971), 115. This image may be "primarily associated with the Sinai of *Exodus* XIX and with the *montem domini* of the twenty-third psalm. Behind these Biblical associations lies a whole body of feeling about the sacredness of mountains" through pagan associations.

³⁸ *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy* (see note 35), 27. The image is found at 128v.

their alien setting (an idea not unlike that of the bizarre filamentous bush that shows up repeatedly in the *Bedford Hours*). That argument, however, does not sound very persuasive: in fact, in the same *Hours of Mary of Burgundy* King David is portrayed kneeling outside his palace, framed within a typical Flemish urban background complete with a swan swimming placidly in a canal bordered by houses. And everyone is familiar with scenes of the Annunciation staged within refined northern interiors.³⁹

To summarize, the illustrations of *Books of Hours* translate into the figurative art the literary concept that makes of nature a private human domain where commoners work and nobles amuse themselves. Therefore, they portray the outdoors mainly as pleasant, controlled spaces, or much more rarely as savage and hostile ones (whenever these are associated with evil or violence). As the first type of imagery vastly outnumbers the second, it deserves a closer look. The happy and confined green space where aristocrats disport themselves seems to be the figurative counterpart of the poetic idea of the park. This literary concept is discussed at length by Paul Piehler in his analysis of medieval allegory:

[T]he enclosed garden, park or paradise, the *locus amoenus*, [is] portrayed as intensely desirable, and situated either very remotely or behind inhibiting physical or psychic barriers. In medieval literature and art these are in origin closely connected with the sacred groves of the pagan gods [...] they also represent a reconciliation of wilderness and city, the hostile powers of nature tamed but not extinguished, or, psychologically, reason and intuition harmonized . . .⁴⁰

He finds the origin of the imagery in the Bible, specifically the Garden of Eden and the derived idea of the *hortus conclusus* of the Song of Songs. "These Biblical gardens were associated respectively with prelapsarian innocence and with the purity of Christ's love for the soul, according to common allegorical exegesis." Two significant qualities accompanied this concept and rendered it popular in literature and related illumination: they represented exclusive spaces that "walled out all but the elect," and "thanks to their general currency, they provided a reference easily comprehensible to the allegorist's audience."⁴¹

Outside of literature, the enclosed park was probably a reality since ancient times. Evan Eisenberg postulates that it may have been invented by the Persians

³⁹ For example, the *Annunciation* in the *Très Riches Heures* of Berry is set in an elegant Gothic church and depicts the Virgin at prayer (since the 1380s a common French transposition from Mary's chamber to a church). Schacherl, *Très Riches Heures* (see note 19), 82, 84.

⁴⁰ Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (see note 37), 77–78. The evolution of the royal park from hunting preserve to tame garden is discussed in the chapter "Hunting or Gardening: Parks and Royal Rural Space" by Marilyn L. Sandidge in the present volume.

⁴¹ Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (see note 37), 78, 99. He adds (88) that the *locus amoenus* is described in several scholarly works: "E. R. Curtius, for example, traces the 'ideal landscape' back to Homer."

or may have had its origin in Mesopotamia. In either case, "it is the sort of thing that is bound to arise in any place where hunting is a general practice and people come to outnumber the game. At some point the ruling classes must protect their sport from the people's hunger."⁴² A third, more contemporary idea may also have insinuated itself in these images: the actual castle gardens of the period.

[They] should be considered an important influence on literary and iconographic descriptions. The typical courtly garden of the twelfth century was located in a small walled enclosure within the castle. Cultivated purely for the ordered beauty of its flowers and lawns, its enjoyment confined to the elegantly attired members of the privileged classes, it must have appeared as a haven of beauty in contrast with the country outside the castle, which was devoted to utilitarian agriculture as far as the encompassing forest or wilderness had been cleared. [. . .] In relation to the castle itself, the garden must also have provided a haven from the turbulence of the main hall; its development seems to have coincided with the development of private sleeping and dining rooms, which functioned similarly as refuges from the commotion and vulgarity of the retainers [. . .]. Yet these real gardens should not be considered so much a source for or influence on the gardens of the poets but rather a parallel and mutually reinforcing instance of the same tendencies [. . .]."⁴³

While private space (especially in princely mansions) had evolved sufficiently by the fifteenth century to render the secret garden less useful as refuge from the noisy common halls, nevertheless the metaphor of the secret garden continued to enjoy favor in the later Middle Ages, a favor that is abundantly reflected in poetry, and also in the so-called "soft style" (*Weiche Stil*) of late Gothic art.⁴⁴

On the subject of the park in literature, Piehler makes another observation that could help clarify the obsession with enumerations that afflicted the poetry of the period (witness Chartier's insipid list of platitudes quoted by Huizinga). According to Piehler enumeration is a method of domesticating nature, make it familiar and safe. In examining the passage of Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules* in which the dreamer find himself in a park and immediately identifies thirteen trees, and a similar passage in Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* in which the protagonist lists the trees in the Garden of Mirth, Piehler brings the reader's attention to the importance of cataloguing:

At the mythical level, it expresses the reduction of the wilderness, the *silva*, to order, to a park-like state, by the naming of things. When the trees are finally separated from the wood, the unpredictable, menacing, but unmanifested creatures of our fears are

⁴² Evan Eisenberg, *The Ecology of Eden* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 172. He adds in an another passage (199) that in medieval Europe, as land resources became scarce, the elites "found it necessary to wall nature in and wall other people out."

⁴³ Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (see note 37), 99–100.

⁴⁴ König, *The Bedford Hours* (see note 30), 15.

laid to rest. Thus the cataloguing proceeds with a thoroughness surprising to modern apprehensions, implying that we are here concerned with a park and not a forest [. . .]. And the wilderness ordered becomes a reconciliation of city and forest, reason and intuition, and thus, in terms of the traditional symbolism, the *locus amoenus*, the good park, paradise.⁴⁵

Outside of *Books of Hours*, classical works and chivalric romances were the two most popular categories of princely books, in which the familiar worlds of agriculture and of imaginary but conventional biblical settings were necessarily less obvious. In the latter genre, in particular, one could expect a more fanciful, and perhaps even inspired, depiction of wilderness. Instead here, too, an idyllic atmosphere permeates the images of nature, even when they complement texts that place heroic humans (or personifications) within a wide world of geographical possibilities. An instructive example is the *Livre du Cœur d'amour épris*, a work of prose narrative and poetic dialogue written in 1457 by Duke René of Anjou, self-styled king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem (and therefore better known as King René).

The book is dedicated to his nephew, Duke Jean of Bourbon, and follows the adventures of René's own lovesick heart personified as Cœur, as it is removed from his chest during sleep and handed to Désir to pursue the love of Dame Merci. The two are later joined by Largesse, and the trio travels over land and sea, with mandatory stops at mysterious castles and huts that materialize in the wilderness and encounters with various allegorical figures, friendly or hostile. Of the seven extant manuscripts of this work three are illuminated, and of these the most ambitious is BNF MS 24399, which contains seventy illuminations by an unidentified artist, all stylistically coherent and quite faithful to the text.⁴⁶ Twenty-seven scenes take place indoors and forty-three outdoors, but the majority of the outdoors pictures represent either a confined space or an open space in which the centerpiece is a man-made object that absorbs the interest of the writer and of the illuminator. In one extreme case, twenty-nine illustrations are repetitions of the same scene: Dame Courtoisie has led the three companions to visit the cemetery where are buried those who succumbed to love sickness.

On the large alabaster portal of the cemetery are suspended twenty-nine coats of arms (some fanciful inventions) of illustrious men past and present who have

⁴⁵ Paul Piehler, "Myth, Allegory, and Vision in the *Parlement of Foules*: A Study in Chaucerian Problem Solving," *Allegoresis The Craft of Allegory in Medieval Literature*, ed. J. Stephen Russell. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 664 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 200–201. For the interpretation of de Lorris's passage, see also Evan Eisenberg, *The Ecology of Eden* (see note 42), 198.

⁴⁶ René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Cœur d'amour épris*, ed. Florence Bouchet (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2003), 14, 16, 52–55, 84.

visited the place.⁴⁷ As the text goes through a prolix recital of the story of each personage (some of whom were acquaintances of King René), the illustrations faithfully accompany each explanation. All vignettes show the three characters standing below the massive portal and discussing each blazon as it is illuminated in turn, until the “grand finale” when all of them appear lit together. The cemetery itself is visible in the background as a shapeless green lawn dotted with tombstones.

That leaves only fifteen specific outdoors scenes, where characters meet or are simply in transit between places, but in these, too, human details rule over natural ones. For example, in one scene Coeur and Désir meet Esperance in front of her pavilion “a l’oree d’une grant forest, en pays estrange et contree descongneue, en ung pré plantureux, desoubz un pin tresbel, hault et vert et droit” (at the edge of a great forest, in a strange place and unfamiliar locality, over a luxuriant lawn, under a beautiful pine, tall, green, and straight). Having dismissed the setting in one sentence, the writer launches into a much more detailed and inspired description of the pavilion: it is made of silk, embroidered with pearls, with a tall jasper column at its entrance bearing an inscription with advice to prospective lovers to remain constant.⁴⁸

The illustration faithfully records the event, with the foreground entirely occupied by the human figures and the mysterious pavilion. Surrounding the group is an idealized landscape, charming and serene like all the others of this series of illustrations: a uniform green sprinkled with shrubs to suggest meadows; a dirt path with a few discreet stones placed on the side and rows of little bushes all alike to mark its edges; a grove of trees, again all alike, to represent a forest impenetrable and alien, and yet smooth and harmonious in their sameness (the pictorial equivalent of the “tall, straight pine” of the text).⁴⁹ Further, the famed northern taste for vibrant colors, so much in evidence in the numerous depictions of armors, clothes, pennons, and princely interiors, does not apply to natural scenes, which instead remain confined within a soft palette of greens and blues. Likewise, the celebrated love for painstaking details does not translate to images of wild nature: regardless of the land traveled by the three characters, everything looks the same.

Watery landscapes partake in the same sweet domesticity: in the scene where Coeur is defeated in a duel by Souci he falls into the River of Tears, whose waters are shown flowing smoothly as from a faucet. Later on the three personages

⁴⁷ René d’Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d’amour épris* (see note 46), 292–354. The manuscript is on line, and these images can be seen at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f174.image> through f265.image (last accessed July 10, 2011) corresponding to fol. 68v–91r.

⁴⁸ René d’Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d’amour épris* (see note 46), 98–100.

⁴⁹ <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f17.image> (last accessed on July 10, 2011); corresponding to fol. 5r.

embark for the Island of Love from a grassy shore, while a gentle sea laps at its edges like waters of a pond.⁵⁰

In fact, while the illustrations in this manuscript usually follow closely the text, they only depart from it when the text describes a harsh landscape. For example, at one point the main characters arrive

[E]n une vallee grande et merveilleuse, en païs obscur et desert, et parmy la valee passoit une riviere parfonde, hideuse, trouble et espouventable durement. [. . .] en my la valee, entre hayes et espines, sur la riviere, une petite maisonnette couverte de chaulme, mal acoultre.⁵¹

[to a large and strange valley, in a place dark and deserted, crisscrossed by a river deep, horrible, turbulent, and quite terrifying [. . .] and in the middle of this valley among bushes and thorns and, above the river, a small hut, covered with stubble and ill-kept.]

Over the door of the dilapidated cottage the inevitable inscription announces that this is the dwelling of *Mélancolie*. The accompanying illustration does show the worn cabin as the visitors approach, but the barely-visible river bank on the left lower corner is as smooth as a lawn and the thorny bushes above it look like planted shrubs.

In another episode *Coeur* and *Désir* arrive late in the day at the forest of *Longue Attente* after struggling for hours to find their way among wood scraps where peasants had cut logs (there is a slight tone of annoyance in noting this plebeian intrusion, as if the forest should be a princely private space, not to be shared). As they settle in for the night, leaving their horses to browse, they hear water flowing nearby from what appears as a dark rock, and drink thirstily. Immediately the fair weather gives way to rain and thunder, and they have to camp in the cold downpour. On the following morning, after the storm has passed and while *Désir* is still asleep, *Coeur* notices that the rock is actually a black marble fountain from which gushes forth foul water, and that bears an inscription warning that this is the Fountain of Fortune, built by a giant, and that will bring ill luck and foul weather to whomever drinks its waters.⁵²

⁵⁰ The two episodes are in René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), 144–50, 244–53, and the illustrations are respectively at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f63.image>, and <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f140.image> (last accessed on July 10, 2011); corresponding to fol. 22r, 54v.

⁵¹ René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), 136. The following illustration is found at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f48.image> (last accessed on July 10, 2011); corresponding to fol. 17v.

⁵² René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), 120–32. The illustration is found at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f43.image> (last accessed on July 10, 2011); corresponding to fol. 15r.

The illumination shows Désir asleep and the horses pasturing nearby, and a green lawn under the golden light of the morning sun, while Coeur stands in front of the mysterious fountain reading the inscription. But there is no illustration to accompany the frightening storm of the preceding scene.

On the other hand, whenever the subject turns to the bizarre, the monstrous, the untamed human nature, the artist reveals remarkable virtuosity in interpreting the text. For example, the two heroes at one point come to meet Jalousie. The text describes her as a dwarf with spiky coarse hair like an old boar, huge pendulous breasts and ears, a gaping mouth full of uneven teeth, spindly legs and webbed feet, short hairy arms, and scantily dressed in an animal skin.⁵³ The creature is a composite image made up of all what was considered ugly in that period, and rendered by means of a list of traits that were the opposite of the ideal of feminine beauty (soft, flowing blond hair, small mouth and breasts, slender feet, long graceful arms).⁵⁴ It is not a well-integrated image, but displays creativity—and not a little humor—on the part of the artist. Likewise, as attested by numerous marginalia in *Books of Hours* and drawings from maps, there existed a rich folklore surrounding exotic creatures, both human and animal, that supposedly inhabited unexplored lands. The ubiquitous Wild Man and Wild Woman were imagined as hirsute, naked, and ape-like, and supplied a popular theme at masked balls and *tableaux vivants*; while the intriguing *sciopodes* were often portrayed on their back, shading their faces with their single humongous foot.⁵⁵

⁵³ [une nayne bossue toute contrefaite de visaige et de corps, laquelle avoit les cheveux presque d'ung pié et demy de hault, droiz et rudes, gros et noirs comme si ce fust la hure d'ung vieil sanglier. Ses yeulx estoient emflambe et reluisans comme charbons ardans ; le nez avoit tortu et grant, les sourcilz pendans sur les yeulx, la bouche longue et large jucques aux oreilles, les dents grandes, jaulnes et mal acoutrees, les oreilles pendans plus d'une paulme, le front et le visaige noir, ridé et hideux, les tetasses grandes, molles et pendans sur le ventre ; et les espaulles estoient plus haultes que les oreilles, les braz cours, gros et veluz, les hanches haultes, la jambe gresle, toute esgratignee d'espines ; les piedz avoit larges et patuz comme ung cyne , et n'avoit sur elle vaistu pour tout habillement que deux peaulx de lyons ou tout le poil, nouees sur l'espaule] René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), 110-12. The image is at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60005361/f24.image> (last accessed on July 10, 2011) corresponding to fol. 8v.

⁵⁴ For a discussion on medieval concepts of beauty and ugliness, see Umberto Eco, *On ugliness*, transl. Alastair McEwen (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 116, 142, 159-63 and Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, transl. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). In particular, he states (80) that "[f]or the medieval, a thing was ugly if it did not relate to a hierarchy of ends centered on man and his supernatural destiny." Also Lazma Razda-Cazers, "Old Age in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* and *Titivel*," *Old age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early-Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 201-18.

⁵⁵ For an example of strange creatures in a map and the comment on *sciopodes*, see Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (see note 32), 242. Mentions of people masquerading as Wild Men can be found in late medieval chroniclers: for example, the account of the tragic

The medieval open-mindedness toward inclusion of the bizarre element in the human world renders even more striking the artists' reluctance to imagine a wild and yet attractive world in which non-human elements occupy the artist's inspiration. One of the few such examples is the famous but enigmatic *Garden of Earthly Delights* (1480–1490) by Hieronymus Bosch. In particular in the central panel the artist conceived a paradisiacal world that never was, a panorama of land and water framed by fantastic mountains surmounted by impossible peaks and looking like abstract sculptures, an organic-looking fountain made of "hybrid growth of flesh-colored protuberances set in a shimmering blue lake," perfect trees with dense foliage loaded with brilliant fruits scattered about "shimmering meadows." Within this exuberant nature frolic exotic animals together with imaginary ones such as winged fish and gigantic birds, and a crowd of naked humans of diverse races engaged in various activities, some realistic (lovmaking) and some not (crawling into giant shells or among huge strawberries).⁵⁶

The central panel delivers to the modern observer an image oddly akin to science fiction. Still, it forms a coherent ensemble with the left panel (the Garden of Eden, with God introducing Eve to Adam) and the right one (the man-made Hell of war as a vision of a burning city under a night sky, looming over the silhouettes of soldiers and refugees), as in all three panels humans are still central to the composition. In a completely different spirit, the shutters of the triptych provide a rare medieval example of natural landscape devoid of human presence, as the painter imagined the Earth on the third day of creation, a flat surface surrounded by a globe of water and unpopulated, shrouded in a uniform grey dimness as the sun and the moon had not yet come into existence to light up the world.⁵⁷

The fame that this triptych achieved is corroborated by the number of contemporary imitations, which indicate a certain diffusion of the taste that inspired the original painting, one that is far from the pastoral view of nature encountered so far. For that reason alone, apart from its acknowledged artistic value, this exceptional work deserves mention. However, it cannot in itself be construed as a reflection of drastically evolved princely tastes. True, in 1517 (one

masked ball of 1392 to which King Charles VI and others participated dressed as wild men and in which five courtiers died of burns in Jean Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicle*, trans. John Jolliffe (London: Harvill Press, 1967), 343–46. For another view of this concept, see the chapter "Trespassing the Sierra: Encounters in a Liminal Time and Space" by Carrie L. Ruiz in the present volume.

⁵⁶ Hans Belting, *Hieronymus Bosch: Garden of Earthly Delights* (Munich, Berlin, London, et al.: Prestel, 2002), 14, 26, 47–54. The image of the triptych can be viewed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Garden_of_Earthly_Delights_by_Bosch_High_Resolution.jpg (last accessed on August 29, 2011).

⁵⁷ Belting, *Hieronymus Bosch* (see note 56), 21.

year after the artist's death) it was in the possession of Count Hendrik II of Nassau, art connoisseur and bon-vivant, intimate of Archduke Philip the Fair and of the Imperial family, but we do not have the full history of how it came to be produced and who inspired the artist (apart from the second book of Genesis and his own fantasy). Further, Bosch was one of the first artists to leave private sketches that presumably had no relation to princely patronage, and that reveal his own keen personal interest in nature (witness his realistic pen and ink drawing of an owl perched inside a gnarly tree). And lastly, he operated at the threshold of the sixteenth century, a period that (at least in the artistic sense) has been called "no longer medieval and not yet modern."⁵⁸

In more conventional examples such as King René's work, elements of landscapes are also less detailed than in the famous triptych, leaving the observer with a vague and rather superficial impression of prettiness. The gentle features of the landscapes that frame the adventures of Coeur are not the result of incompetence on the artist's part, nor do they reflect the limited personal experience or the specific taste of King René alone. Rather they are the product of strict adherence to esthetic canons. In fact they reappear in the more skillful illumination of MS 2597 at the National Library of Vienna, which may have been one of the prince's own private copies and whose miniatures have recently been attributed to a well-known illuminator from the Netherlands, Barthélemy van Eyck (ca. 1420 – after 1470). This work only contains sixteen illustrations (out of the forty-four apparently planned), and of necessity fewer outdoors scenes than the previous example.⁵⁹ The artist's skill is particularly evident in delivering a greater variety of vegetation (at least three different types of trees, rendered convincingly, instead of the abstract columns surmounted by even foliage of the previous manuscript) and also in the more nuanced play of lights that depict realistically the time of day (for example, the suggestive scene in which Coeur wakes up in the meadow next to the magic fountain).⁶⁰ However, this is still a garden variety nature.

This series of pictorial examples, none of which could be summoned to witness the feelings expressed four centuries later by Schopenhauer, could justify the conclusion that wilderness as such indeed lacked esthetic appeal for medieval princes. Unfortunately there are fewer anecdotal testimonies to support this hypothesis. One of the few belongs in the *Chroniques* of Georges Chastellain, a massive work spanning several volumes (many of which now lost) that chronicles the reigns of the last two Valois dukes of Burgundy, in particular Philip the Good

⁵⁸ Belting, *Hieronymus Bosch* (see note 56), 8, 61, 66–74.

⁵⁹ René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), 37, 52, 65.

⁶⁰ The illustration of this scene and all others are in René d'Anjou, *Le Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* (see note 46), Sommaire.

(r.1419–1467). Book IV contains a rare episode that illustrates the reaction of this prince to finding himself alone with nature. Curiously, this is the same episode that Huizinga employed in his previously mentioned chapter on the comparison between plastic arts and poetry to make the point that the prose of the period could rival painting but only when the writer allowed himself to depict life with “vivid realism.”⁶¹

One winter afternoon in 1457, following a violent quarrel with his son, the elderly prince (who was in his sixties) rushed out of his palace of Brussels alone on horseback, headed for nearby Hal, where, for reasons not explained in the text, he had hastily arranged to meet a group of his courtiers. But while they reached their destination without difficulty, Philip never arrived. The days were already short, the weather was cold and rainy, and a thick fog set in just as the duke wandered through mountains and valleys intent on confusing his tracks to avoid being followed. Soon he found himself lost just as evening set, and—the writer adds emphatically—a man “qui hommes avoit par millions pour lui faire service” (who had millions of men to serve him) was suddenly all alone without even “un povre bouvier pour lui tenir compagnie” (a poor cowherd to keep him company).

As the night “si hideuse et si pleine de péril” (so frightful and dangerous) approached under the frigid downpour, the lonely rider entered “une grosse espaisse foreste, là où n’y avoit ne voye, ne sentier” (a thick vast forest without roads or paths).⁶² Hours later, he was still struggling among “vallées crolleuses et parfondes où oncques n’avoit eu chemin” (deep crumbling gorges never before traveled), soaked by the rain, splattered with mud, trembling from cold and hunger, his hands torn by bushes, dismounting often to feel in vain for tracks on the soggy terrain, all the while crying out for help, while his horse kept slipping in the icy muck. After hours of enduring hunger, loneliness, and cold, he settled for locating any “maisonchelle champestre” (peasant cottage) that could offer him a roof for the night. But by then fatigue had caused his mind to betray him. At one point he was laughing hysterically at himself, at another he was mistaking the white waters of a stream for a road, and was barely saved from falling into it by his horse, which refused to plunge in despite the Duke’s angry spurring.⁶³

Eventually, long after midnight, the Duke followed the distant barking of a dog to the humble hut of a peasant. He banged insistently at the door, demanding to be let in and promising a reward. The poor man was already asleep with his “famelette” (little wife) but eventually got up and let in the stranger, realizing that

⁶¹ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 285. The description and commentary of the episode are at pp. 286–89.

⁶² Georges Chastellain, “Chroniques,” *Œuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols. (Brussels: Heussner, 1863–1866; Geneva: Slatkine, 1971), 3: 240–43.

⁶³ Chastellain, “Chroniques” (see note 62), 3: 250–53.

this was not a bandit or a vagrant. However, he did not recognize his Duke, nor did Philip reveal his identity, likely feeling vulnerable all alone as he was, and perhaps a little ashamed. The host led him to his fireplace to dry up, and fed him bread, cheese, and water. The writer, who thought it an amazing feat for such a lofty prince to break the hard bread all by himself without *écuyer trenchant*, launches into an emotional homily in conventional bucolic style on the bliss of eating simple food without fear of poison and drinking water instead of wine.⁶⁴

The Duke had a more difficult time in convincing his host to lead him to a road out of the forest: the peasant informed him that the way to Halsenbergue was only one league away (about five kilometers) and—significantly—that the traveler could easily find it on his own. During the conversation it turned out that Hal was also only two leagues away and so the Duke (reluctantly, and after a rather comical haggling) paid the peasant quite well to deliver a message on his behalf to his servants who were still expecting him. Philip reached his new destination at dawn and once on familiar grounds went straight to the house of a gamekeeper of his and demanded a bed. There he finally fell asleep and was later found by his frantic courtiers.⁶⁵

Some caution may be in order when interpreting this narrative, in particular the insistence on the dangers faced by the Duke. Chastellain's first-hand source must have been Philip himself, as he was alone in his adventure, and after the initial shock he might well have rearranged his memories to render his actions into a coherent sequence. As for the writer, notoriously prone to prolixity and sentimental exaggerations, he seems to have relished the opportunity to portray the Duke as a figure of fable and may well have inflated the real dangers to bring his narrative in line with the chivalric romances popular at court. But after brushing aside some of the most obvious literary devices, like the repeated mentions of mountains, valleys, and ravines in the suburbs of Brussels, or the choice of terms ("*maisoncelle*," "*famelette*") designed to enhance the stature of the Duke by lowering that of his rescuer, what surfaces from the account is above all Philip's terror at being alone, his unfamiliarity with his own territories, and his relief at the comforting company first of the peasant, and then of the gamekeeper, social subordinates who could tame the wilderness for him and render it safe (much like the mysterious figures that succor Coeur at critical points in René's story).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Chastellain, "Chroniques" (see note 62), 3: 255–60.

⁶⁵ Chastellain, "Chroniques" (see note 62), 3: 261–67. The Duke convinced the peasant to go to Hal and inform his servants that "the man whom they expected" would not be coming to meet them there.

⁶⁶ Philip's propensity for getting lost may have been exceptional, witness another episode in a previous chapter of the same "Chroniques" in Book III (whose attribution to Chastellain is debated). In the years 1451–1453, Philip was conducting a punitive expedition against Ghent,

The wild, both in reality and fantasy, was apparently perceived either as desolate and hostile, or as a mysterious realm of frightening magic. In the first instance, the forest did present real dangers during times of war and rampant banditry, as attested by the striking accounts of contemporary chroniclers. But those dangers were removed from the setting of Chastellain's anecdote, as the ravages of the civil war and the Hundred Years War did not quite reach the Duke's own dominions, and were becoming a thing of the past even in France by the time this episode took place. Further, as confirmed by the same chroniclers, the violence had mainly affected commoners, leaving the princes with the relatively minor problem of decreased revenues from damages to their tenants and the expenses associated with keeping ready armies.⁶⁷ Philip would most likely have been faced only with the annoyance of having to deal with the debris of wood cutting, like the characters in René's story.

As to the literary tradition that associated wilderness with hostile magic, Piehler explains it through the intriguing concept of the guardians of the *loci*.

In ancient literature, the primary danger to the consciousness inherent in the wilderness is manifested and symbolized in its animal inhabitants. [. . .] At the frontiers of the unknown, the sleep of reason engenders monsters, apotropaic sentinels warning man away from the psychic disintegration threatened where urban rationality will no longer find its necessary phenomenal correlatives. [. . .] It remains to be noted that the fundamental conflict of man and wilderness [. . .] did not escape the ancient philosophers and was inherited by the medieval allegorist in abstract form as well as in poetic imagery. Plato's analysis in the *Timaeus* of the universe as created by the interaction of *nous* and *ananke* (Reason and Necessity or Mind and Matter) was developed by Aristotle into the more familiar conjunction of *nous* and *hyle*, where *hyle* denotes the chaos antecedent to the operation of the Form, but literally means 'forest'. [. . .] We have noted that the *silva* is not only a physical but a psychical entity for the primitive and the sense of this is carried over into the Middle Ages . . .⁶⁸

Even human (or human-like) presence could be frightening when it took the form of guardian of *loci*. This figure still evoked "the awe, the mingled repulsion and attraction of the sacred place, and in particular the instinctive fear of crossing its

which had revolted against his authority, but after winning a battle near Gavere was easily led on a false path and away from his goal by a local guide, who wished to prevent a massacre. Chastellain, "Chroniques" (see note 62), 2:373.

⁶⁷ For the terrifying role of bandits in France during the Hundred Years War, see in particular Thomas Basin, *Histoire de Charles VII*, ed. Charles Samaran, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1933–1944), 1: 107–09, 2: 53–57. For a specific example, see the story of the Bastard of Vaurus who had a woman tied to a tree to be devoured by wolves in *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris: 1405–1449*, ed. Colette Beaune (Paris: Livre de poche, 1990), 184–87. For the portrayal of a malignant enchanted forest, see the chapter "Outlying Spaces in the Middle English Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne" by Jean E. Jost in the present volume.

⁶⁸ Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (see note 37), 73, 75.

boundaries" which are associated with "the magico-religious taboos on crossing frontiers among pre-literate peoples."⁶⁹ Medieval literary tradition had embraced this idea, which is quite in evidence in René's work. For example in the episode of the Fountain of Fortune the mysterious supernatural presence in a wild place makes itself felt through the inscription to warn the passers-by that they are being watched by an invisible being.⁷⁰ But how much the concept of guardian of *loci* could have influenced the narrow portrayal of wild nature in illuminations, or even Philip's reaction to finding himself alone in it, is hard to guess. It seems much less problematic to support a different argument, that princes revealed a marked preference for the tame, semi-private park or the private *hortus conclusus* as a consequence of their privileged social status. What their ideal landscapes represent is a nature with moral rather than aesthetic attributes, a humanized nature in a man-dominated world, safe, controlled, and predictable. Once the wild was truly tamed or otherwise removed from their direct contact, they could view the same through a sentimental lens (a process rendered familiar to the early modern world through the more recent invention of the Noble Savage).⁷¹

To find a correspondence in modern popular art one could search among the landscapes of early Disney animations, in particular *Snow White*, *Bambi*, and *Fantasia*. And just as medieval pastoral taste and its accompanying sentimentality provoked the harsh criticism of Huizinga, Disney's animations have been accused of exposing young audiences to "false, sanitized and sweetened images of nature," in particular for portraying wild animals as "disarmingly cute" human helpers.⁷²

⁶⁹ Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (see note 37), 119.

⁷⁰ The phenomenon of "barrier symbolism" is discussed, for example, in Piehler (*The Visionary Landscape* [see note 37], 120–21) in relation to Dante's descent into Inferno: "As we look at later developments of barrier symbolisms, we see that the sacred objects used to mark the portal or threshold frequently appear in the form of inscriptions from sacred texts, as a society becomes literate [. . .]."

⁷¹ Along those lines, see the observation by Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), 306 related to the emergence of cuddly toys within the culture of modern childhood, cited in David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* (see note 3), 27: "Just as the rise of the teddy bear matches the decline of real bears in the wild, so soft toys today have taken the shape of rare wild species [. . .] They act as a kind of totem, associating the human being with the animal's imagined capacities and value. Anthropomorphism traduces the creatures themselves: their loveableness sentimentally exaggerated, just as, formerly, their viciousness crowded out empirical observation."

⁷² Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* (see note 3), 3, 5. As an aside on the theme of the cartoon-like quality of the "soft" late Gothic style, a small painting on wooden panel known as the Frankfurt *Paradiesgärtlein* (circa 1400, at the Städelsches Kunstinstitut), attributed to an unidentified master of the Upper Rhine, depicts a lovely walled garden, with a fountain, flowers, and plants. In the right corner, to represent a defeated Evil, is a cute small dragon lying on the grass belly-up and watched by saints. König, *The Bedford Hours* (see note 30), 18–20. See at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meister_des_Frankfurter_Paradiesg%C3%A4rtleins_001.jpg (last accessed on July 10, 2011).

In addressing those allegations, David Whitley examines the link between the pastoral and the sentimental and reaches conclusions that could well be applied to the calendar or biblical images of *Books of Hours*:

Pastoral can include the labour that nature exacts from men and women, as the price they must pay for living on the land, and can promote awareness of some of the harsher exigencies of a simple existence close to the earth, especially as expressed through the change of seasons. Such hardship is never allowed to dominate however; the keynote of pastoral is an expression of innate sympathy between all living things, at times evoked lyrically and often associated with human sexual love in idealized forms. [...] [The] essence of the pastoral mode has always been in some sense a retreat or escape.⁷³

Sentimentality has elicited disapproval from both art critics and philosophers because of its tendency to misrepresent reality. As Mark Jefferson explains, it is more pernicious than other forms of emotional indulgence because it involves attachment to a distorted set of beliefs.

[It places] emphasis upon such things as the sweetness, dearness, littleness, blamelessness, and vulnerability of the emotions' objects. The qualities that sentimentality imposes on its objects are the qualities of innocence. But this almost inevitably involves a gross simplification of the nature of the object. And it is a simplification of an overtly moral significance. The simplistic appraisal necessary to sentimentality is also a direct impairment to the moral vision taken of its objects.⁷⁴

Anthony Savile is even more emphatic: A "sentimental mode of thought is typically one that idealizes its object under the guidance of a desire for gratification and reassurance." We can look sentimentally to nature when we "project onto an inert and separately existing world a warm concern for our human welfare and a tender amenability to our desires and needs."⁷⁵

Sentimentality is one of the most evident qualities of the arts of the waning Middle Ages, and forms the basis for the bucolic conventions of its literature (for example, Chastellain's use of "maisoncelle" and "famelette" when referring to facets of peasant life) that Huizinga disparaged.

The new enthusiasm for nature does not mean a truly deep sense of reality, not even a sincere admiration for work; it is only an attempt to adorn courteous manners by an array of artificial flowers, playing at shepherd and shepherdess just as people had played at Lancelot and Guinevere. [...] The pastoral genre was the school where a keener perception and a stronger affection towards nature were learned. The literary

⁷³ Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* (see note 3), 9.

⁷⁴ Mark Jefferson, "What is Wrong with Sentimentality?," *Mind* 92.368 (1983): 519–29; here 526–27.

⁷⁵ Anthony Savile, "Sentimentality," *Arguing About Art, Contemporary Philosophical Debates*, ed. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 315–19; here 318.

expression of the sentiment of nature was a by-product of the pastoral. [. . .] The pastoral travesty serves for all sorts of diversions; the domains of pastoral fancy and of chivalric romanticism mingle.⁷⁶

Through the lens of sentimentality edges were blurred, contrasts smoothened, and details lost. The illuminations of princely texts, just like the poetry and romances that flourished at their courts, suggest that the wild cavalcades and hunts of princes and their retinues had more to do with the view of the countryside as a vast personal park in which they could vent their aggression or display their vanity than with any taste for the wild and the unknown.⁷⁷ Wild nature may be dangerous, but it also carries with it what Whitley calls “the possibility of freedom and development.”⁷⁸ Therefore the Romantic outlook is more dynamic, as the rapt observer-participant is poised to plunge into uncertainty. On the other hand, the pastoral view is static because of its nostalgic component, as it looks back in search for an Arcadia or a Paradise Lost, which the patron demands and the artist recreates.⁷⁹

The crucial difference between the two perceptions of nature, Romantic and pastoral is, to a great extent, a matter of who is in control: nature in the first case and the human in the second. The component of control and utilitarianism in princely tastes should not be underestimated: for Coeur (and his author) the sublime experience is the attainment of the kiss of his imaginary lady, who finally is convinced to bend to his will, and the ultimate disappointment the denial of the prize, as the forces of envy and slander take her away at the very moment in which he expects fulfillment. And it seems appropriate that the setting for the climactic scene should be not the outdoors but the inside of a castle, after a formal presentation of the longing heart to Dame Merci.

Therefore it is not surprising that lack of sensitivity to the unbridled power of nature would be found in figurative art as well, especially when art was subservient to a literature destined for a category of patrons who made a dogma out of hierarchy and control, and who had the means to exact artistic forms that reflected their social needs. Comfort for them meant a mediated space, that is, the presence of human buffers between themselves and the natural world. Raised to

⁷⁶ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (see note 4), 134–35.

⁷⁷ It is even possible to imagine the walled garden as a complete ecosystem to the service of the elites, protected from exposure to the common forest, the dominion of everyone. For a discussion of this topic, see the chapter “Landscape of Luxury: Mahaut d’Artois’ (1302–1329) Management and Use of the Park at Hesdin” by Abigail P. Dowling in the present volume. The contribution by Marilyn L. Sandidge to this volume provides further insights from an English perspective.

⁷⁸ Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* (see note 3), 107.

⁷⁹ Evan Eisenberg (*The Ecology of Eden* [see note 42], 151) links the melancholic aspect of Arcadia to its denial of inevitable change. He discusses in depth also the myths of Eden and the Golden Age throughout his work.

count on those buffers (they were constantly surrounded by courtiers and rarely even slept alone) they lacked the skills to navigate unaided in the wilderness—unlike their beloved fictional heroes—while they were quite capable of confronting man-made dangers without hesitation.

In the era of Jean of Berry, John of Lancaster, Catherine of Cleves, René of Anjou, and Mary of Burgundy, the power and sheer numeric presence of princes was reaching a high point, and in addition to their status of “over-mighty subjects” they tended to form a cohesive group that shared esthetic and social values through participation in tournaments, banquets, and membership in chivalric orders by then limited (in practice if not in theory) to members of their own class.⁸⁰ Even if an analysis of attitudes toward wild nature is limited to the upper crust by the availability of sources, there are hints that princely taste trickled down to the gentry and the bourgeoisie. A pervasive indifference, if not utter dislike, for untamed aspects of nature permeates the accounts of explorations and conquests that opened up at the tail end of this period, one that witnessed a relatively large number of late medieval people come into contact with new and alien forms of nature.

While the Conquistadors described with awe the marvels of the Aztec capital and the splendor of its royal gardens, they seem to have hardly noticed the harsh natural beauty of the Mexican land, just as the Andes and the jungle of South America were perceived only as impediments to overcome in their quest for riches.⁸¹ Exploration of the unknown for its own sake was centuries away; and it is perhaps significant that appreciation of wilderness detached from material aims had to wait for an era when princes were no longer the arbiters of taste.

⁸⁰ For the comments on “over-mighty subjects” see John Gillingham, *The Wars of the Roses: Peace and Conflict in Fifteenth-Century England* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 6. For a discussion on princely attitudes, tastes, and values reflected in blazons, personal devices, exclusive chivalric orders, and their shared perception of the threat of a rising bourgeoisie, see Philippe Contamine, *La noblesse au royaume de France de Philippe le Bel à Louis XII* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 287–98, 311–20. Among chroniclers, Jean Le Fèvre, *Chronique de Jean Le Fèvre, seigneur de Saint-Remy*, ed. François Morand, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1876–1881), 2:201–08 gives a lengthy description of the annual festivities of the order of the Toison d’Or, while Jean Molinet, *Chroniques*, ed. Georges Doutrepont and Omer Jodogne, 3 vols. (Brussels: Palais des académies, 1935–1937), 1:250–51 records the elaborate ritual of initiation of Maximilian of Austria into the order.

⁸¹ For the conquest of Mexico see, for example, *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz del Castillo*, trans. John Ingram Lockhart, F.R.A.S., 1 (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1844) at <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/32474/pg32474.txt> (last accessed on July 10, 2011), in particular Ch. LXXXVII, where the main city is referred to as Iztapalapan. For the conquest of Peru, see for example Juan de Betanzos, *Suma y narración de los incas*, translated and edited by Roland Hamilton and Dana Buchanan from the Palma de Mallorca manuscript (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

Chapter 17

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Marshy Spaces in the Middle English *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*: Physical and Spiritual Territory

Sites within Middle English romances such as the *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* often alternate between rural and urban spaces, thus revealing their idyllic, utopian, courtly, military, frightening, dangerous, or ephemeral aspects. Each locale is the space on which are imprinted contrasting emotions and narrations comprising the essence of the romance. These narratives are remarkably literary, engaging, and dramatic, perhaps borrowing from an oral tradition.¹ According to Thomas Hahn,

While its supernatural and chivalric storylines have affinities with popular tales, the complex rhyme scheme, narrative structure, written sources, allusions, and content demonstrate that *Awntyrs* was a distinctly literary effort. *Awntyrs* emerges from a transitional cultural context, in which a literate author has fully explored oral stylistics and techniques.²

¹ See W. R. J. Barron, "Alliterative Romance and the French Tradition," *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background: Seven Essays*, ed. David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 70–87; here 82. Barron describes the *Awntyrs* as "[c]omposed of two episodes of moral reproof of the courtly and chivalric excesses of the Round Table; the first derived largely from the *Trentalle Sancii Gregorii*, widely current in a number of Middle English versions, with additional details from other didactic works in English; the second apparently freely composed, drawing on the alliterative *Morte Arthure* for many motifs of Arthurian arrogance and on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* for verbal and, possibly, thematic suggestions."

² Thomas Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, "Introduction: *The Awntyrs off Arthur* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS [Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages], 1995), 169–226; here 169.

Part of this literary expertise is evidenced in the creative manipulation of place in contrasting episodes within the tale. In fact, dichotomies between them resonate throughout, highlighting both polarities of the supernatural and the chivalric, the rustic and the civilized. The setting of the two-part *Awntyrs off Arthure* is both rural and urban, displaying supernatural, ethical, and magical, as well as physical, dubiously ethical, and natural aspects. These dual settings function as liminal border boundaries between each other: the wild, rural terrain of hunting, and the cultured urbane place of the castle, being supernatural and natural respectively. Interestingly, both locations partake of the idyllic and the mundane. Further, as Barron points out, "*The Awntyrs off Arthure* (north-west [England], c. 1400–30) consists of two episodes on a common theme of disregard of self and generosity to others, in both of which Gawain acts as Arthur's surrogate."³ Both the rural region of the Tarn, on the edge of the court settlement, and the more populous colony of the knights itself, encourage such interaction and concern for others, as the separate narratives confirm.

Additionally, a list of oppositions suffuse the two parts vis-à-vis each other and within each part, such as: light and dark, warm and cold, living and dead, wealth and poverty, monarchy and aristocracy, material flesh and supernatural spirit, concrete and ephemeral, habitation and visitation, wild and civilized, contained and excessive, privation and nurture, earthly space and supernatural space beyond the grave, tension and interdependency, popular and chivalric, convention and originality, and contrast and complementarity.⁴ These colliding dualistic splits between and within the two parts extend to the characters within each as well and add to the structural net binding the tale together. Such radically different opposing contexts and auras compound and complicate the relationship between rural and urban space.

In Part 1 of the *Awntyrs of Arthure*,⁵ first set on the idyllic hunting grounds of Arthur's estate near the "Turnewathelane,"⁶ the marshy bogs of a remote area

³ R. W. J. Barron, "Bruttene Deorling: An Arthur for Every Age," *The Fortunes of Arthur*, ed. Norris J. Lacy. Arthurian Studies, LXIV (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 47–65; here 61.

⁴ The complexity of the content is truly remarkable, but as Derek Brewer also suggests, "The addition of rhyme to the unrhymed alliterative long line of Old English produced a whole range of poetic forms, many of them exceptionally advanced and complex, such as the long-line stanzaic poems of . . . *The Awntyrs off Arthure*." See "The Alliterative Revival: Origins and Social Backgrounds," *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and Its Literary Background: Seven Essays*, ed. David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 34–53; here 36.

⁵ As Krista Sue-Lo Twu points out, this poem "belongs to a set of long marginalized texts that have received rather less attention than their rhymed, metrical contemporaries with their more patent continuities with later English poetic tradition." See her article "*The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*: Reliquary for Romance," *Arthurian Literature* 20 (2003): 103–22; here 103.

⁶ Several critics have discussed place and people names in this Scottish setting, among them Susan

somewhat removed from civilization, place is in fact the subject of the narrative of episode one.

In the tyme of Arthur ane aunter by-tydde
By þe Turnewathelane—as þe boke telles
Whane he to Carlele was comen, [that] conquerour kydde[famous].⁷
(ll. 1–3)

As Sir Frederick Madden comments, the Turnewathelane “is still the name of a small Tarn or lake of Inglewood . . . near Hesketh in Cumberland.”⁸ Andrew R. Walkling describes the Tarn Wadling as “a now defunct lake widely associated in the Middle Ages with spectral apparitions.”⁹ This magical lake is the foundation of one of the three romance sites.

The Awntyrs off Arthure offers a rather complicated representation of rural space insofar as it encompasses various degrees of rusticity.¹⁰ The most courtly, least rural Rondolette Hall is in populous terrain and offers the comforts of civilization. The more rural, even pastoral, area of the hunt is luscious and sensually evocative but removed from general civilization.¹¹ The battlefield is lacking the grace and beauty of the hunting grounds but apart from the court, offers the penultimate degree of rural region. The most rural is the unnatural, isolated, and grief-wrenching Tarn, apart from the real world, physically and psychologically. Although the rural spaces are not introduced in decreasing degrees of rusticity, they each represent a different degree of rurality.

Kelly, “Place Names in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*,” *Literary Onomastics Studies* 6 (1979): 162–99; Rosamund Allen, “Place-Names in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*: Corruption, Conjecture, and Coincidence,” *Arthurian Studies in Honor of P. J. C. Field*, ed. and forward, Bonnie Wheeler; Introduction, Margaret Locherbie-Cameron (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 181–98; Andrew Breeze, “*The Awntyrs off Arthure*, Caerphilly, Oysterlow, and Wexford,” *Arthuriana* 9.4 (1999): 63–68; and id., “The Lady Beryke and Sir Meneduke in “*The Awntyrs off Arthure*,” *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 100 (2000): 281–85.

⁷ This and subsequent quotations are taken from *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne: A Critical Edition*, ed. Robert Gates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

⁸ Sir Frederic Madden, ed. *Syr Gawayne*. London, 1839, quoted in *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* (see note 7), 200. n. 2

⁹ Andrew R. Walkling, “The Problem of ‘Rondolette Halle’ in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*,” *Studies in Philology* 100.2 (2003): 105–22; here 105. See also R. C. Cox, “Tarn Wadling and Gervase of Tilbury’s ‘Laikbrai’,” *Folklore* 85 (1974): 128–32, which discusses the aura surrounding the Tarn Wadling.

¹⁰ Similarly, in her contribution to the present volume Penny Simons finds that rural location features more than once, for she notices a “double move from courtly to rural space and back again” in the fabliau world of culture and subversion.

¹¹ For a discussion of the ecocritical and pastoral elements in Walther von der Vogelweide, see Christopher Clason’s contribution and Albrecht Classen’s Introduction to this volume.

One day, Arthur and his companions repair to the sloping hills and valleys of the region to slay the doe in the enclosed forest, in the ridges of the woods. In this natural territory, apart from their regal living quarters, Queen Gaynour on a white mule is decked out in royal ribbons, precious rubies, sapphires and jewels of magical import, and queenly attire to set the tone of the environment; extravagant, luxurious beauty is of both natural and artificial types. She is accompanied by the well-horsed Sir Gawayne, equally well attired within the same natural landscape, where they will soon become separated from the hunting party, dissociated from other human beings. The initial focus is on the real, concrete, actual, present land and what it mysteriously becomes, as well as what this newly magical space reveals to the awestruck Dame Gaynour and Sir Gawayne.

The couple share a concrete affiliation with the watery marshland: "He ladde þat lady so long by that loghe [lake / pond] sides" (31). This lake recalls the opposing dangerous waters of the Wheel of Fortune, with its nipping monsters and devilish reptiles, and the life-renewing waters of the Lady of the Lake's habitat. The narrative itself opens when "One a day þei hem [Gawayne and the Queen] dighte [prepared to go] to þe depe delles" (1.6) near the Tarn.

When they enter the gates by the green well, they leave idyllic civilization and enter fairy territory, a land of frightening magical realism; but being somewhat remote, other knights will not be privy to its mysteries. Under nature's boughs in this liminal space between the court and the Tarn, where knights might hear hunting horns and behold sights in bare, hoary groves, "Þei kest of here couples [pairs of dogs] in cliffes so colde" (44). The immediate experience before encountering the Tarn is very sensory. The deer lie still in the thicket cowering for dread of death by the strong stream; they wage war in the wild and create misery. The hunters shout noisily amidst the bright colors and green groves as the king blows his horn, following on the track with his men. The high activity level, loud sounds, splashing colors, and warm temperatures establish and mark the space; its intensity foreshadows but also contrasts the following scene.

By a magical laurel, Dame Gaynour and Gawayne retire amid green leaves and groves, now fully immersed in the Tarn environs and, to their surprise, witness an unexpected marvel. Its introduction occurs as

The day wex als dirke
 Als hit were mydniȝte myrke . . .
 Thus to fote ar þei farene, þes frekes vnfayne [reluctant],
 And fleene fro þe forest to þe fawe felle [variegated hill];
 Thay rane faste to the roches [rocks] for reddoure [hardship] of þe rayne,
 For þe snitterand snawe þat snayppede þame so snelle [quickly].
 (75–76; 79–82)

The weather has mysteriously transformed this locus from a warm, bright, sunny May habitation to a cold, raining, sleeting darkness of isolation. The idyllic place of the hunt outside the castle hall suddenly becomes a harsh and fearful rural space of desolation. Surprisingly, only Gaynour and Gawayne experience this alternate reality—a spectacle of death, a vision freed from social constraints. As Albrecht Classen notes of Walther von der Vogelweide's "Under der linden" in his contribution to this volume, in such rural space, "the location was far enough away from society to guarantee some kind of privacy."¹² Similarly here, though in a reversed order, the dramatic wizardry of the rural space begins as a supernatural marvel and converts the natural environs: the morning daylight turns to evening darkness; the dry warm May morning witnesses a wet, cold snowstorm. Then, out of the lake materializes an unexpected supernatural phantom in the form of a human skeleton—both non-human and human—"In the lyknes of Lucyfere, layesteste [most loathsome] in helle" (84) overtaking the pair. It presents a striking contrast to the noble couple. As Hahn points out, this shocking "'adventure' of *Awntrys*, its encounter with the alien, takes the form of a gothic fantasy: a ghost described in screeching and grotesque detail."¹³ The threatening apparition then glides toward Syr Gawayne "þe gates to gayne" (85).

The encroaching specter hunts the pair in this place as the hunters did the vulnerable deer. To this frightful sight is added the sound of terror mimicking that of animals of prey: "3auland and 3omerand [howling and lamenting] with many a lowd zelle" (86) this figure screeches, much like Arthur's horn-blowing at the deer. The terror envelopes and transports the pair to a new reality at another locus as the ghostly creature continues:

Hit zaules [yowls], hit zameres [laments], with wonges [cheeks]
ful wete

And seid withe siking sare [sighing with sorrow]:
 "I bane þe body me bare. [I curse the body that bore me];
 Alas! Now kindeles [is aroused] my care,
 I gloppen [fear] and I grete [cry]!" (87-91)

Dame Gaynour's response is predictably human—she feared and wept for being in this threatening inhuman place, begged Gawayne's advice, and called other knights discourteous for abandoning her to the most hideous ghost that she ever heard cry out—worse than the hunting horns—on her death day. Gawayne advises her to grieve the ghost no more, for he will learn her issues, what may

¹² See Albrecht Classen's contribution to this volume on the great German poet Walther von der Vogelweide where he notes the importance of rural distance from civilization in that poet's work.

¹³ Thomas Hahn, "Introduction," *Awntyrs off Arthure* (see note 2), 169.

relieve the griefs of this starkly bare skeleton, and presumably how to reverse the threatening nature of this place.

Meanwhile, as this ghastly figure glides closer to the pair, its savage sounds increase and its horrifying sight becomes more appalling. The spectre establishes the hideous, frightful space it inhabits, derived from the dreaded place from whence it comes, how it looks, and how it sounds.

Bare was þe body and blake to þe bone,
 Al bi-clagged in clay, vncomly cladde;
 Hit waried [cursed], hit wayment [wailed] as a womane
 But on hide [skin] ne on huwe [color] no heling hit hadde;
 Hit stemered [staggered], hit stonayde [is astounded], hit stode as a stone
 Hit marred [was confused], hit memered [stammered], hit mused
 [stared] for madde. (105–10)

These extreme emotional responses from the spirit add to the climate of unreality, the unearthly feeling of an unnatural place, as her snaky hair raves, her voice screeches, her bare skeletal body startles, and her charred black bones frighten. A toad sits menacingly on her head, and her sunken eyes glow as burning embers. Encircled with serpents, she seems an inhuman reflection of a menacing ghost. Even the greyhounds fear her grim noise, and the birds tremble at her shrieks as her glowing shadow covers them. All nature has turned from this unnatural monstrosity. The mystical tarn has magically incubated this staggering, stammering fiend from purgatory, leading Gawayne to call on Christ, and inquire of the phantom: "why þou walkest þese wayes þe wodes with-in?" (136).

In response, the apparition reveals her monstrous transformation: she once had face and figure "fairest of alle" (137), was christened and baptized, and kin of kings known to be strong. She then admits why she appeared to them under this supernatural aspect, the only one at her disposal: "I ame comene in þis cace / To speke with youre queen" (142–43). The contrast in physical and emotional loci is startling: powerful, beautiful, and lively warm May sunshine—but perhaps shallow sensation—is pitted against powerless, ugly, deathly dark, cold, snow-painted environs—but housing deep significance. Gaynour's mother presents yet another contrast: not merely self-interest, redemption to save her soul, but a state of generosity toward the court (including her daughter) and the poor for their own sake; heeding her will prevent the ugly death Gaynour might otherwise be doomed to endure.

The horrific ghost now concedes she was once herself a Queen, brighter than most, "Gretter þene Dame Gaynour" (147). She once oversaw treasure, gold, palaces, parks, ponds, plows, towns, towers, castles, countries, crags, and ravines. She held a place of power and dignity. Now thrown out of her luxurious house, caught and enclosed in a most incommodious place of putrefying clay, she notes

what death has done to her, and begs “Lete me onys haue a sighte / Of Gaynour þe gay” (155–56). Her next words reveals her identity as Gaynour’s mother: “Lo! How delful dethe has þi dame dizte! [used]” (160). Such a supernatural revelation, Gaynour’s mother rising from the dead, converts the place of their concourse, already removed from local civilization, to an unnatural, shocking, mystical, and psychologically isolated locus. She admits her state, moaning:

Now I am a graceles gost and grisly I grone;
 Withe Lucyfer in a lake lo3 [low] am I lighte [fallen].
 Thus am I lyke to Lucefere, takis witnes by mee:
 For al þi fresshe foroure [furred garments]
 Muse one my mirroure. (163–67)

One thinks of Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* whose devil Mephistophilis admits, “Why this is hell, nor am I out of it” (scene iii, l. 80),¹⁴ fusing seemingly opposite realms. Her message to her daughter Gaynour is to recognize what might happen to one of the phantom’s prior status, a kingly ruler and emperor, and avoid the pitfalls which led her to this pit of despair: “þus dethe wil 3ou dizte [treat], thare you not doute” (170). As Hahn comments, the spectre “suffers now for the hidden sins of the flesh she committed on earth. The ghost laments the split within her own life, between a brilliant, splendid appearance and a fetid inner corruption.”¹⁵

This dichotomy well reflects the split between natural court chivalry and unnatural rural desolation. Hence, the past and the present, the outer and the inner, the splendid and fetid are juxtaposed, but potentially linked if care is not taken. The phantom insists that her daughter take heed while on this locus of earth, when she is arrayed richly and rides in company, to:

Haue pite one þe poer whil þou art of powere . . .
 Whene þi body is bamed [embalmed] and brouzte on a bere
 Thane wille þay leue [leave] the lyghtely [unconcerned] þat now will
 þe loute [bow to] (173–76)

In other words, death changes everything: how one behaves before death will determine what happens after, and sycophants will leave you. The place of the afterlife is established by behavior in the previous life. Therefore, fulfilling the

¹⁴ The Project Gutenberg Ebook of *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* from The Quarto of 1604, by Christopher Marlowe, ed The Reverend Alexander Dyce. www.gutenberg.org/files/779-h/779-h.htm (last accessed on Nov. 7, 2011); see also *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments* (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Co, 1999, 120ff.

¹⁵ Thomas Hahn, “Introduction,” *Awntyrs off Arthure* (see note 2), 169 .

injunction to give to the poor will have later ramifications—it will decide one's permanent locus. Then it will be too late to act differently, generously, because

For þene þe helpes no þing but holy praiere.
 Þe praiere of þe poer may purchas þe pes;
 Of that þou yeues [yelling] at þi yete (gate),
 When þou art set in þi sete,
 With al merthes [mirths] at mete [dinner],
 And dayntes in des [dias]. (177–81)

Even worse, the supernatural apparition dwells in danger and sorrow, nasty and needy, naked at night, and followed by a host of fiends from Hell, rudely hurling her, promising to harm her. She utters “In bras and in brymstone I brene as a belle” (188). A sadder creature was never wrought in the world—too hard for any tongue to tell her torment! Her final warning is to

Thenk hertily on þis
 Fonde [Try] to mende thy mys,
 Thou art warned ywys,
 Beware by my wo! (192–95)

Gaynour is moved by this eye-glowing, mouth-screeching, snake-infested skeletal creature and the environment she carries with her. The ephemeral space is wild, mysterious, supernatural, devilish, threatening, and all-encompassing, distressful to anyone passing through its aura. Patricia Clare Ingham suggests:

The poet's description of the awful body of the ghost of Guinevere's mother—a body that seems, in the vividness of the description, considerably more substantial a horror than its status as ghost would suggest— . . . the sign of a horrific, and isolated future born from sin . . . the blackened purgatorial ghost of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* [was] once beautiful but terribly transformed through sexual corruption and infidelity.¹⁶

Faced with this appalling setting encompassing her own mother, the Queen expresses her compassion, and asks what she can do for her:

“Wo is me for þi wo,” quod Waynour, “y-wys,
 But one þing wold I wite if þi wil ware:” (196–97)

Can matins or masses cure her anguish, or any worldly goods? Would bishops' prayers bring her to bliss? Or might bodies of monks in cloisters relieve her anguish? Gaynour looks to supernatural spaces to resolve her mother's physically debilitating habitation. The environment is so horrific that she even doubts the identity of this fiendish ghost:

¹⁶ Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 184, 183.

If þou be my moder grete wonder hit is
 That al þi burly [stately] body is brought to be so bare! (202–03)

Philippa Tristram notes the infrequency of this situation, stating “It is very rare to find the macabre in Arthurian romance at any date; there is one exception in *The Awyntyrs off Arthure*, where a walking corpse reverses a courtly hunt.”¹⁷ The ghostly figure replies honestly that she is suffering legitimate punishment, for “I brake a solempe a-vow” (205), a fact now known only to Gaynour. Presumably the vow she broke was her marital vow, an implicit warning to Gaynour not to do the same. By the token of her admission, and the sights, sounds, and smells of this place, can she know her mother, so transformed from her earthly state. The sympathetic daughter, obviously shaken by the experience of this supernatural field, asks what she can do to alleviate this suffering of “þe baleful [harmful] bestes þat one þi body bites / Alle blendis [stirred] my blode—thi blee [complexion] es so blake!” (211–12).

Gaynour’s emotional locus has been changed upon meeting an otherworldly phantom discovered to be her charred mother from purgatory: she has moved from a state of complacency to a state of great sorrow and empathy. The frightful visitor boldly divulges her sins of “luf paramour, listes [lusts], and delites / Þat has me liste [lie] and lenge [stay] lo3 in a lake” (213–14). We now know the who, what, when, where, and why of this pathetic fiend, haunted by the wild worms causing her destruction. She is in a place of physical and emotional desperation and despair, drawn to seek a remedy through her daughter who lives in a place with access to restitution. When Gaynour asks how to remove her mother from this place of pain and anguish, the phantom begs for “thritty trentales” between mid-morning and noon to release her soul from suffering and bring her to bliss. The dutiful daughter promises “a myllione of masses” (236), while acknowledging the corporal work of mercy to feed the hungry as well:

To mende [cure] vs with masses grete myster [need] hit were;
 For him þat rest on þe rode [cross],
 Gyf fast of þi goode

¹⁷ Philippa Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature* (1976; Plymouth: Latimer Trend & Company Ltd., 1976), 188, n. 22. Perhaps another example of the macabre would be Marie De France’s *Bisclavret*. See also the most amazing cases of hellish projections in the Styrian poet Heinrich von dem Türlin’s *Diu Crône*, here cited from *The Crown: A Tale of Sir Gawain and King Arthur’s Court*, trans. and with an introd. by J. W. Thomas (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); see Albrecht Classen, “The Literary Puzzle of Heinrich von dem Türlin’s *Diu Crône*: Seen from a Postmodern Perspective,” *Michigan Germanic Studies* 24.2 (1998, published in 2000): 111–28; id. “Self and Other in the Arthurian World: Heinrich von dem Türlin’s ‘Wunderketten,’” *Monatshefte* 96.1 (2004): 20–39.

To folke þat failene þe fode,
While þou art here. (230–34)

A transformed Gaynour seems cognizant of her responsibilities, ready to perform them, and aware that only while “here” on earth is that duty possible. To her parting question “what angers God the most?” she learns the answer is pride and belongings, which bear bitter boughs, that make men break the commandments, and lose their happiness. Unless they are saved of their sorrow before leaving this mortal world, they must know pain and care. When Gaynour asks what prayers to say, she is told to follow virtue, but also to remember the transience of her earthly habitation:

Mekenesse and mercy, þes arne þe moost,
Haue pite one þe poer, þat pleses heuen king;
Siþene charite is chef, and then is chaste,
And þene almesse-dede aure al oþer þing . . .
Hold þese wordes in hert;
Þou shal leve [live] but a stert [moment],
Heþene [Hence] shal þou fare. (250–53; 258–60)

She has been introduced to the place of virtue, a state the phantom has not attained. She is warned to follow its tenets lest her mother’s state become hers.

The place of the ghostly phantom is also one of magic and prophecy, doom and gloom. Gawayne the warrior, not oblivious to this ghost’s pathetic state, now seeks advice as to how he shall fare, already guiltily admitting he has “defoulene þe folke one fele [many] kinges londes” (262) and stolen “riches ouer reymes [realms] withoutene eny righte” (263). His moral state is precarious. The phantom predicts that although King Arthur is now high on the Wheel of Fortune, “He shal lighte ful lowe one þe se sondes [sea sands]” (268); he shall achieve misfortune and his fortuitous lords will fall to low descent. She advises Sir Gawayne to guard himself from all the warfare and treason, and beware of Tuscany, for “þere shal þe rounde table lese [lose] þe renoune . . . In a slake [hollow] þu shal be slayne, / Siche ferlyes [marvels] shulle falle” (293, 298–99). Her advice to him is physical, but also as admonitory as her advice to Gaynour. In Cornwall, Arthur and the Round Table shall be wounded, and all die on one day, overcome by a subject wearing sable. A child plays at the ball today who shall overcome him full fiercely that day—no doubt meaning Mordred. Thus this mystical skeleton reveals future secrets as a warning to Gawayne in a locus of magic, charms, and fearful forebodings. She departs telling him and her daughter:

I mot walke on my way þorgh þis wilde wode
Vnto my wonyng stid [living place], in wo for to welle [boil] . . .
Þenk on þe danger and the dole þat I yne dwelle . . .

With a grisly grete [cry]
 Þe goste a-wey glides.

(315–16, 318, 324–25)

She has attained her goal: to seek Gaynour's help through trents to extricate herself from hell and to admonish the couple not to warrant a similar doom in their future. The wild woods, the boiling marshy Tarn, the unnatural May winter, and the foreboding screams signify the danger of sin and its punishment, the supernatural dimension of grace and its absence, the sensory threats to the heedless; unfortunately Gaynour's mother's corpse forewarns those too foolish to heed a coal-charred body, fire-glowing eyes, serpent-infested head, and fearful, shrieking yells emanating from the far-flung rural spaces of Arthur's isolated domain. One thinks of the productions of Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516) or Hans Memling (1430–1494) similarly depicting the foreboding conditions of mankind in startling, graphic detail.

And yet, as Randy P. Schiff points out, the tale also warns of an ideology of anti-imperialism and

proves to share in the localism that leads us to look to the marches for the region whence the *Awntyrs* began to disseminate itself more widely across Britain. In revealing to the ghost his reservations about his career as a military man profiting from the arbitrary dispossessions of others, the Gawain of the *Awntyrs* gives voice to a regional anxiety produced by the central role of militarization in the economic life of the borderlands.¹⁸

The power of marshes to suck in those who traverse its surface without proper guidance and a means of escape from the entrapment of lust or military greed is potent. Gawain's anxiety and militarism will soon be enacted in Part II.

After the clouds "unclosed" and the sun emerges, a new open environment evolves from the prior desolation. A blow from Arthur's hunting horn breaks the spell of this supernatural event and returns Gaynour and Gawyne to a more expected, natural, physical environment. In addition, the blast on the horn in this enclosed forest draws many people together, "And al þe riale route to þe quene rides" (330). The dark, confined, secretive, restricted space of the Tarn is replaced by an open, natural unrestricted party.

The only carry-over is mental: when Gaynour reports the strange marvel she has witnessed, the wise are astonished, but all, including she, soon forget the incident. In Part II,¹⁹ first set under a lovely silk canopy inside the civilized Rondolesette

¹⁸ Randy P. Schiff, "Borderline Subversions: Anti-imperial Energies in *The Awntyrs off Arthure and Golagros and Gawain*," *Speculum* 84.3 (July 2009): 613–32; here 617. Schiff also comments on the reason for this borderland tension and anxiety: "That the Anglo-Scottish border stands as the key site for literary meditations on the dangers of imperialism stems from the particularly nefarious brand of expansionism practiced by the English" (618).

¹⁹ Krista Sue-Lo Twu points to the debate over the bi-partite structure of the poem, noting that

Hall at Arthur's castle (and later in the battlefield), the sense of place, both here and in southern Scotland, is the object of the narrative, the reason for battle between Gawayne and Galeron. This Hall, appearing only once in the romance at line 337, at "the moment at which Arthur and his court leave behind the terrifying experience of the Tarn Wadling," as Walkling states, is mysterious. Walkling continues:

The poem gives no hint as to where "Rondolesette" is meant to be, nor what sort of hall would have been located there. From the context of the poem, we may assume that it is some distance from the Tarn Wadling, as the Arthurian court must travel there in order to enjoy the feast that awaits them; besides, surely no king solicitous for the safety of his court would hold a feast in close proximity to a place with such manifest supernatural associations.²⁰

What is the nature of that place? John Robson's 1842 edition suggests the name of the manor is connected with Plumptre Park, a tract of land belonging to the king not far from the Plumptre Land of line 475. In the next century, editors of *The Place Names of Cumberland* suggest "Randerside Hall," is based on John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine of 1612*. In 1897, F. J. Armours posits "Randholme" "described by Samuel Jefferson in his 1840 *History and Antiquities of . . . Cumberland* as 'an ancient manorhouse, near the junction of the Ale with the Tyre, supposed by Mr. Hogson to be Raynerholme.'"²¹ After discussing these several possibilities Walkling concludes this "halle" might indeed be a "hale," using the MED definition of "a temporary structure for housing, entertaining, eating meals, etc.; an open pavilion, a tent, etc."²²

So one might envision a stable manor house or a less permanent tent-like structure as the site of Rondolesette, the second space of the romance, furnished with chivalric accoutrements. This peaceful bridge spans the other two more

"Ralph Hanna's 1974 edition continues to present the poem under the subtitles 'The Awntyrs A' and 'The Awntyrs B' because 'The Awntyrs may present not one poem but two.' See Twu, "Relequary for Romance," 104–05 (note 5), and Ralph Hanna III, *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terme Wathelyn: An Edition Based on Bodleian Library MS Douce 324* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974), 17. Also see Rosalind Allen, "Some Skeptical Observations on the Editing of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*," *Manuscripts and Texts: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature: Essays from the 1985 Conference at the University of York*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), who reasserts the poem's organic unity. She claims "few would dispute" A. C. Spearing's argument for unity in "Central and Displaced Sovereignty in Three Medieval Poems," *Review of English Studies* 33 (1982): 247–61 esp. 248–52 and "The Awntyrs off Arthure," *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1981), 183–202.

²⁰ Andrew Walkling, "The Problem of 'Rondolesette Halle'" (see note 9), 107.

²¹ Andrew Walkling, "The Problem of 'Rondolesette Halle'" (see note 9), 108.

²² Andrew Walkling, "The Problem of 'Rondolesette Halle'" (see note 9), 111–12.

dramatic border spaces of the deadly Tarn and the deathly field of battle.²³ If the purpose at the Tarn was for Gawayne and Gaynour to absorb instruction and advice, the purpose at the canopy is to nourish the body at supper—at least initially. The focus at the arrival is on the interior spaces of Rondales Hall / Rondolette Hall, a pleasant break between the frightening supernatural Tarn of Gaynour's ghostly mother and the gory, bloody, but natural place of conflict over Galeron's faraway lands.

Furthermore, as Christopher Dean suggests, "Instead of the [stereotypical] knight going out from Arthur's court to seek adventure, in the *Awntyrs off Arthure* he [namely, Galeron of Galloway] comes to the court, and his battle there with Gawain is the principal event of the second section of the poem."²⁴ This place of battle in Part II is thus the third setting or locus of the romance. More importantly, as Schiff indicates, "the *Awntyrs*, set near the marcher stronghold of Carlisle, ultimately situates the collapse of the Arthurian empire at the very edge of its expanding frontier."²⁵ This ancillary Arthurian court thus represents the liminal space between the civilized and the wild, conflict and accommodation, aggression and virtue, war and peace. The situation here is political and physical rather than magical or supernatural, as rivals for the Scottish realm compete for contested land under Arthur's auspices. Patricia Clare Ingham notes that "This romance links marriage to militarism and to policies of annexation; it depicts the pleasures of a centralized sovereign who rests his practices of land distribution and regional control on the violence of knightly rivalry."²⁶ Thus, Arthur's Carlisle position, sitting squarely between kingship of the borderlands in Scotland and kingship of the Round Table, is pivotal as issues of aggression between the two factions are enacted. The space is dangerous.

Here, far from the contested Scottish lands, the company of the wild, ghostly phantom is replaced by that of well-appointed lords and ladies. After the court partakes of nourishment, soon another surprise occurs, replacing the ghostly screeching of Part I, for "Pere come in a setoler [citole player] with a symbol [cymbal]" (343). The sounds of horror are replaced by the music of harmony. Following him "A lady luvsom of lote [manner], ledand [leading] a knizte . . . rydes vp to þe heghe desse [dias] bifor the riale [royal king]" (344–45). She is as

²³ For a discussion of boundary borders in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, see Jean E. Jost, "Margins in Middle English Romance: Culture and Characterization in the *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* and the *Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*," *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 133–52.

²⁴ Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England: English Attitudes to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 79.

²⁵ Randy P. Schiff, "Borderline Subversions" (see note 17), 613.

²⁶ Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies* (see note 15), 180.

pleasing in every way in a glorious green gown and a cloak with bird decorations as the ghost was threatening and fearful in her skeletal frame—as alive and vibrant as the phantom was dead and charred black. Not snakes but jewelry and a gold crown encircled her hair. Not demandingly, but politely she asks Arthur to welcome the errant knight accompanying her. She functions as an assistant or facilitator for the military content, just as Gawayne functions as an assistant or facilitator for the ethical content in Part I; as the maid ushers in and connects Galeron and Arthur, so Gawain ushered in and connected Gaynour and her ghostly mother.

Equally attired in noble raiment, the visiting knight presents an imposing figure. Whereas Gawayne and Gaynour went to the marshy Tarn of the ghost to hear her bedraggled ghost's story, the noble lady and her knight go to the royal castle hall to tell theirs. But before long, the next day they will repair to the battlefield; it too will be a tarn, a marshland watered by competing knights' blood. The entrance of the couple is as pleasant as that of the ghost was frightening. Not gliding eerily over dirty water as did she, the knight rides a dignified Friesland horse and is kindly welcomed by Arthur. As in the Tarn visit, the newcomer is asked questions, such as who are you, and what do you seek? While the ghost sought to admonish Gaynour and Gawayne and seek help, the knight seeks to admonish Arthur and Gawayne and seek retribution for the loss of his lands through battle. The situations are similar, if the places are different, each appropriate to its venue.

As the ghost claims to be Gaynour's mother who has lost her dignity and bequeathed it to Gaynour, the knight claims to be Galeron of Galloway, whose lands have been usurped by Arthur and given to Gawayne. He and the phantom have both lost their domiciles. They are visitors to a territory not their own. The knight demands justice of his listeners, as the ghost requested mercy of hers. The knight Galeron accusingly says to Arthur:

Pou hast wonene (my landes) in werre with a wrange [wrong] wile
 And geuen hem to Sir Gawayne—þat my herte grylles [angers]—
 Bi al þe welthe of þe worlde, he shal hem neuer welde [rule],
 While I þy hede [care] may bere,
 But [unless] he wyne hem in were,
 Withe a shelde and a spere,
 On a faire feld.

(421–22, 425–29)

Both ghost and knight have lost their prior dignity and power, and fear others' disdain; Galeron fears others "wold laghe me to scorne" (233) for so easily losing his eight territories. Although they are now in the lovely woods outside Arthur's cultured Castle, having just completed a chivalric hunt among hounds and horn, by tomorrow Sir Galeron will be matched. Just as the ghost must use all her skills to achieve trentals for her soul to gain heaven, Galeron must use all his skills to achieve victory over Gawayne, for his lands to be returned. Meanwhile, tonight

he will be serviced in Arthur's ancillary court (the second setting or locus of the poem) with rich dainties in a sumptuous environment of chapel, chamber, and hall, rooms warmed by a chimney and decorated with hangings, tapestries and cushions. The contrast with the stark Tarn of locus 1—black, cold, wet, uncomfortable, and incommodious—is extreme. Its severe magical realism contrasts the courtly hospitality on Galeron's arrival (locus 2), and the bloody battleground realism of the impending fight the next day (locus 3). Only the voices of the plaintiffs on the Tarn echo a comparable craving for relief.

The next day, as the place of conflict over who will control the Scottish lands is moved to an outdoor locus, lists are set up at a palace on Plumtone land "Where neuer freke [men] opone folde [earth] had foustene biforne" (476). The space is not quite as rural as the marshy Tarn, but is created for battle: the scene begins with bright, glittering gold, and devolves into bloody red gore. Similarly, the mood of the contestants begins with joy and excitement: "So iolile þese gentil iusted one were" [So joyfully those gentles jousting on war] (502); but it descends into dismay, pain, and wounds; "He swapped [struck] hym yne at þe swyre [neck] with a swerde kene / That greued [grieved] Sir Gawayne to his deþ day" (514–15). When Gawayne returns the favor: "The bronde [sword] was blodly þat burneshed was brizte" (529). As Krista Sue-Lo Twu points out, "The duel between Gawain and Galeron provides another means of simultaneously expressing and containing a violence that might otherwise threaten the court."²⁷

When Galeron decapitates Gawayne's horse Grisselle, the setting plummets from horseback to ground level as the deadly action proceeds downward. The violence increases as "Shene [bright] sheldes were shred [splintered], / Brighte brenes [coats of chain mail] by-bled [bled]" (569–70) on the fair but blood-laden field—rapidly becoming a marshy tarn. These equally matched knights seriously wound each other, until first Gaynour, and then Galeron's lover shriek, screech, weep, and beg for an ending of this torture; the wounded knights moan and groan. We cannot help but be reminded of the recent squeals of the ghost in the Terne Wathelyne. Now Gaynour beseeches Arthur, saying "þes burnes [knights] in þe bataile so blede on þe bent [open spaces]" (629).

Much like the conflict in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale,"²⁸ when Palamon and Arcite fight in a wooded grove until they are up to their ankles in blood, that ground is marshy like the "Terne Wathelyne." This blood-stained battle space now begins to sound and look like the chaotic Tarn of Part I, an otherworldly nightmare now realized in this worldly horror. "Vnnethe [scarcely] miȝte þo sturne [brave men] stonde [stand] vp-riȝte [upright] ; / What for buffetes and blode here [their] blees [complexions] wex [become] blake" (657–58). Indeed, the eerie aspect of the Terne

²⁷ Krista Sue-Lo-Twu, "Reliquary for Romance" (see note 5), 109.

²⁸ See *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987).

Wathleyn has been replaced by a life-or-death environment in this new tarn; both places embody a dangerous locus in a marshy field.

When the confrontation reaches deadly dimensions, and the equally matched combatants are seriously endangered, Galeron acknowledges Gawayne's bravery and competence: thus, he turns all the lands in question back to him. Gawayne reciprocates, giving over his lands to Galeron. The accord which Arthur engineers parallels that accord which Gaynour's mother reaches with her daughter for masses to free her soul and with Gawayne to avoid sins of acquisition such as usurping Galeron's lands. Unfortunately, neither Gaynour nor Gawayne remember her warning about sin. But, as Sue-Lo Twu suggests, the site of the entire poem resides in Arthur, whose kingly figure unites the poem:

Arthur's enthronement here at the exact center of the poem, 'soveraynest of al' (358), provides a meridian at which the Arthurian sun has reached its noon. But far from dividing the parts, the centrality of Arthur's kingship here provides a unifying device for the whole poem. Like the sun at noon, Arthur's reign creates its own day from which morning and evening are measured. Arthur's kingly presence illuminates all of the disparate features of the poem: the Ghost's warning to Guenevere regarding the infidelity that eventually will contribute to the dissolution of Arthur's court; its warning to Gawain about the vicissitudes of fortune and the revolutions of power through military conquest; and Galeron's challenge to Arthur's annexation of his lands.²⁹

Arthur extends and concludes this unification by returning to his court at Carlisle and incorporating Sir Galeron into the Round Table coterie. He generously finds the traveler a permanent place in their social network, and joyfully joins in his wedding ceremony to his sweetheart. As Hahn contends:

. . . the integration of the initially truculent Scots knight Galeron . . . sets out the fundamental pattern within the Gawain romances, whereby outlying Celtic territories are assimilated to a centralizing English perspective; Arthur's kingship consists in his power to control and redistribute the lands—Scotland, Wales, Brittany, perhaps Ireland—that mark the borders of the body politic.³⁰

Thus, those oppositions which can be welded—Galeron and the Round Table Knights, Arthur's immediate courtly habitation and the borderlands, his royal authority and the entire body politic, Galeron and Gawayne, bride and groom—are knit together at the end of Part II. The final bonding of outsiders into Arthurian culture on earth parallels the final expected bonding Gaynour's mother will achieve in the afterlife. Gaynour brings the tale full circle: she heads to the west to enlist holy men and bishops to celebrate masses for her mother, burning

²⁹ Krista Sue-Lo Twu, "Reliquary for Romance" (see note 5), 107.

³⁰ Thomas Hahn, "Introduction," *Awntyrs off Arthure* (see note 2), 172.

in the marshy Tarn. Thus she fulfills the place of daughter, an earthly survivor who rescues her mother from an unearthly purgatory. The author reminds us “*pis ferely [wondrously] bifelle in Ingulwud forest, / Vnder a holte [grove] so hore [bare] at huntyng*” (708–10). Part II, then, is about space at the castle, the courtly Rondolette Hall, the marshy battlefield, and far away places in Scotland; the parallel and contrasting relationships within these constituencies form the heart of the episode.

Thomas Hahn summarizes connections between Parts I and II which emphasize the place of transition in this way:

The fusion of popular and learned, native and Latin, oral and literate in *Awntyrs* accurately conveys the transitional context in which a mixed chivalric romance of this sort participated and was performed . . . The decorated qualities of *Awntyrs* ask to be understood as a cultural event for listeners and readers . . . In its place between literate and oral traditions, its surface *is* its substance, and performance—whether religious ritual, chivalric courtesy and prowess, or poetic composition—is a crucial part of its meaning.³¹

Clearly the poetic embellishments and narrative polarities are being drawn together into a logistical whole by this spatially-minded author. His sense of place encompasses cultural status, emotional locus, physical surroundings, moral position, relationship to material objects, degree of victory, site between reality and fantasy, role or function, and any position vis-à-vis its opposition. How the poet weaves these various structural spaces and places into an intriguing tale is matter for artistic appreciation. For example, Robert J. Gates believes

The two moral dilemmas raised in the first part of the poem, the soul in torment and the injustices of Arthur and his knights, are resolved in the conclusion. Guenevere undertakes to lessen her mother’s suffering by prayer and devotion, and the honor of the Round Table is upheld by the generous treatment of Sir Galeron.³²

While this conclusion at first seems appropriate, it fails to acknowledge that below the surface, the resolutions are merely temporary and fail to reach the core of the problems. Gaynour may lessen her mother’s suffering, but ultimately she fails to learn the lesson her mother came to deliver: beware sins of the flesh. While the military conflict appears temporarily ended, Arthur’s offensive militarism is not staunch, despite the ghost’s warning. Nevertheless, other aspects of the poem, from its graphic poetic imagery, its multiple evocative moods, its sophisticated structural networking, establish the work as an intriguing contribution to the medieval romance corpus.

³¹ Thomas Hahn, “Introduction,” *Awntyrs off Arthure* (see note 2), 174, 173.

³² Robert J. Gates, ed. *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* (see note 7), 5.

But perhaps most impressive is the elaborate use of space to designate and refine tone, content, and construction. This alliterative poem juxtaposes and differentiates the Tarn, the court, and the battleground; the wild, the civilized, and the violent; the surreal, the real, and the gory; the shocking, the reassuring, and the disturbing; the supernatural, the natural, and the deadly; the moral, the courtly, and the immoral; the experienced, the enjoyed, and the imagined territory; the imminent, the adjacent, and the distant; the dreadful tarn, the joyful locus of dinner and the vicious battle; the rhetorical persuasion of a ghost, the hospitable generosity of court, and the physical battle of warriors. All aspects converge on and re-emerge from outlying areas in the suburban regions of Arthur's and Galeron's habitations. In *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, "place" encompasses not merely the setting of purgatory, a joyful party, a fierce battle, and reconciliation of lands but the motives of characters and *modus operandi* of the narrative in each of these spaces that lie behind this most marvelous and unusual Arthurian narrative.

Chapter 18

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Peasant Authors and Peasant Haters: Matazone da Caligano and the Ambiguity of the *Satira del villano* in High and Late Medieval Italy¹

Since its discovery in 1883, Matazone da Caligano's "Nativitas rusticorum" has been revered as the earliest example of the *satira del villano* [satire of the peasant] genre in Italy.² The *satira del villano* genre developed in Europe between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, finding fertile grounds especially in France with the *fabliaux* and in Germany through the *maeren* literature.³ In Italy the genre

¹ I would like to thank Dario Fo for his invaluable insights and his generosity in sharing with me his thoughts on his own version of Matazone's poem. I was first introduced to "Nativitas rusticorum" through Dario Fo's remarkable adaptation in *Mistero buffo*; it is for this reason that I would like to dedicate this article to him. I am also very grateful to Trifone Cellamaro and the kind staff of the *Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana* for their generous collaboration in providing me with helpful information about the Manuscript C. 218 inf. I would also like to thank Albrecht Classen, Christopher R. Clason, and my wife Jeannette Applauso for their helpful comments in reviewing this article. All remaining errors are mine.

² Paul Meyer first discovered Matazone's poem and printed a full diplomatic edition in his pioneering study, see Paul Meyer, "Dit sur les villains," *Romania* 12 (1883): 14–28.

³ Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, *Figurae: Reading in Medieval Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 133–38; Claire Cabailot, "La satire du *villain* à travers quelques textes du Moyen-Âge," *Chroniques italiennes* 15 (1988): 1–27. For a useful biography on the genre, see also Armando Bisanti, *Le Favole di Aviano e la loro fortuna nel Medioevo* (Florence: Edizioni Del Galluzzo, 2010), 97, n.105. See also the excellent article by Michele Feo, "Dal pious agricola al villano matto e bestiale (a proposito di una infedeltà virgiliana del Caro)," *Maia* 20.2–3 (1968): 89–136; 206–23. Domenico Merlini's extensive study on the *Satira del villano* is a very useful source to understand the phenomenon in relation to Italy; see Domenico Merlini, *Saggio di ricerche sulla satira contro il villano* (Turin: Loescher, 1894). See also Francesco Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (Florence: Alla Libreria Dante in Firenze, 1883), 25–38. For an overview of *maeren* literature or other German sources that contain peasant satire, see Albrecht Classen's introduction to this volume.

pioneered by Matazone reached its apex only in a later period during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴ Nothing is known about Matazone, although he was almost certainly a jester; and there are doubts on the dating of the poem, which for the majority of scholars was written between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁵ What is certain is the exceptionality of this piece which is contained in only one manuscript (the C. 218 inf.) held at the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana* in Milan. Furthermore, the influential playwright and Nobel laureate, Dario Fo, adapted Matazone's poem to the stage in his *Mistero Buffo* (1969), thus spreading awareness around the world about the existence of this text and its cultural tradition.

Despite its exceptionality, only a few studies have been devoted to "Nativitas rusticorum."⁶ The poem deserves special attention not only because it is the first known example of the *satira del villano* in Italy, but also for its stimulating and yet complex content. In his poem, Matazone (the motley fool) presents himself as a peasant and speaks at length about the base nature and origin of peasants—supposedly born from a donkey's fart (85–88).

Even though Matazone's playful poem has been defined as the prototype of the *satira del villano*, the term used to identify this genre is debatable and misleading. In Italian the preposition "del" means not only "about" but also "of." Thus, the term *satira del villano* could imply either a satire *about* peasants or a satire written *by* peasants. This linguistic ambiguity is confirmed by the ambiguity of Matazone himself who declares to be a peasant and obliquely seems to ridicule both peasants and denounce their abuses. Perhaps Domenico Merlini's suggestion about the existence of two models of satire (one "pro" and the other "against" peasants) within the genre should be considered.⁷ However, Merlini only hinted at these

⁴ See Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del Duecento*, Tome 1 (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1960), 789–801; here 789.

⁵ Paul Meyer proposed that "Nativitas rusticorum" was written in the fourteenth century; see Meyer, "Dit sur les villains," (see note 2), 15. Cesare Molinari also supports Meyer's supposition; see Cesare Molinari, "Il Detto dei villani di Matazone da Caligano" *Biblioteca Teatrale* 3.3 (1972): 1–19; here 5 n. 3. The majority of scholars, such as Francesco Novati, Gianfranco Contini, and Vittorio Dornetti, believe that the poem could belong to the fifteenth century. See Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (see note 3), 29 n. 2; Contini, *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 789; Dornetti, "Matazone da Caligano e le origini della satira del villano," *Studi di lingua e letteratura lombarda offerti a Maurizio Vitale*, vol. 1 (Pisa: Giardini Editori, 1983), 22–44; here 25 n. 13. Being that most likely the scribe recorded the piece from the oral performance by a jester, it is plausible that "Nativitas rusticorum" was likely performed much earlier than when it was recorded.

⁶ To my knowledge, only three essays—solely devoted to this text—are available. These are Paul Meyer, "Dit sur les villains;" Cesare Molinari, "Il detto dei villani di Matazone da Caligano;" and Vittorio Dornetti, "Matazone da Caligano" (see note 5).

⁷ Merlini briefly distinguishes between two opposing trends within the *satira del villano* genre. The first trend, which he called "satira negativa," is written against peasants, while the other, i.e., the "satira positiva," is written in defense of them; see Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 2), 4. Scholars such as Vittorio Rossi and Alessandro D'Ancona criticized Merlini's terminology "positiva" and "negativa" in their reviews; see Vittorio Rossi, Review of Merlini, *Saggio di ricerche*

dual trends without surveying their possible applications within the genre. After Merlini's remark, no scholar—to my knowledge—has ever pursued this possibility within this poem. Furthermore, scholars have generally privileged the anti-peasant satirical tendency by explaining the literary phenomenon of the *satira del villano* as a European genre featuring parodies written to ridicule peasants and rural life.⁸

In this article, I shall approach “*Nativitas rusticorum*” in connection with the *satira del villano* genre and focus on two conflicting models of satire: One written against peasants, which I call “the peasant hater satire;” and the other written in defense of them, which I call “peasant author satire.” I believe that both forms of satire should be considered as components of the so-called *satira del villano* genre. For this purpose, I shall examine both possibilities and investigate if indeed the poem contains these two conflicting satirical models. If so, the poetic corpus of the so-called *satira del villano* could be understood not only as a simple literary topos directed against peasants. Instead, it could be approached as a complex array of texts containing incompatible yet coexisting messages—which have important socioeconomic implications—and were perhaps directed toward a wide and more heterogeneous public.

Before examining Matazone's poem, I shall briefly introduce these two opposite satirical traditions, surveying their presence and development within the Italian medieval literary tradition. It is likely that both were recognizable by Matazone's contemporaries. This will allow us to approach “*Nativitas rusticorum*” both from the supposed “peasant author” perspective (exemplified by Matazone himself) as well as from his prospective audience (which seems to be exposed to hyperbolic ridicule at the expense of peasants). Finally, after having analyzed Matazone's poem, I will briefly explore Dario Fo's version and adaptation of the poem, which provides modern audience with the unconventional approach of a *satira del villano* as a pro-peasant jester performance.

sulla *satira contro il villano*. *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 25 (1894): 432–36; here 432. Alessandro D'Ancona, Review of Merlini, *Saggio di ricerche sulla satira contro il villano*. *Rassegna Bibliografica della Letteratura Italiana* 2 (1894): 256.

⁸ The medieval peasant satire is currently defined broadly as a European genre which developed in the twelfth century as a consequence of urbanization, which fueled the clash between rural and urban spaces; see Armando Bisanti, “Mimo Giullaresco e Satira del Villano nel De Clericis et Rustico” *Proceedings of the XV Battle Conference and of the XI Colloquio medievale of the Officina di studi medievali*, 1992, ed. Marjorie Chibnall. *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 15 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993), 59–76.

The “Peasant Haters” Satire in Medieval Italy

The trend of the “peasant haters” satire developed in Europe around the twelfth century.⁹ The availability of numerous texts which share a negative—even contemptuous—opinion of peasants have led scholars to conclude that this trend was prominent throughout the Middle Ages. Paul Freedman comments about the frequency of these types of texts in medieval European literature:

That the medieval peasant was usually regarded with contempt is hardly a novelty. The rustic or *villain* was a literary type for the base, the ridiculous. He served as a model of how not to act, epitomizing qualities opposed to the virtuous chivalry of the knight. (. . .) Medieval literary genres such as the French *fabliaux* or German *Schwank-literatur* were devoted (in whole or in part) to the antics of rustics, their foolishness, murderous violence, or proclivities for the lower body functions.¹⁰

Texts that criticized peasants most likely originated after the twelfth century and were fostered by socio-political conflicts among various social classes. Authors such as noblemen, clerics, or city dwellers often expressed disdainful attitudes against rustics.¹¹ In France both Andreas Cappellanus and Chrétien de Troyes provide expressive examples of this explicit type of satire which addresses both male and female peasants.¹² In Italy various examples confirm that authors ridiculed and launched severe accusations against peasants through a wealth of satirical poems, novellas, and proverbs both in Latin and vernacular.¹³ The Venetian late medieval poem “Alphabeto delli villani” records the most recurrent accusation directed against the peasants who are blamed for being lazy, bestial like pigs in the stables, and fraudulent because they had crucified Jesus Christ.¹⁴ Other twelfth- and fourteenth-century texts approach the question in a grammatical fashion by bestowing all possible vices to peasants through the full Latin

⁹ See Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (see note 3), 25–26.

¹⁰ Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 3), 133–34.

¹¹ Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 4.

¹² For further discussion on Andreas Cappellanus and his view of female peasants, see Classen’s contribution to this volume, “Utopian Space in the Countryside.” Chrétien de Troyes in *Yvain* provides an eloquent description of male peasants in the deformed grotesque herdsman who “resembled a Moor,” cited in Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 3), 137. In his study, Freedman notes that male “peasants were often depicted as filthy, subhuman, and comical . . . malformed and unfit for the service of love,” (157) because they did not “possess any particular sexual energy or aggressiveness” (158).

¹³ Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 7.

¹⁴ Cited in Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 3 n. 1. Freedman believes that this connection could trace back to late antiquity and early Christianity, 137–38. His thesis should be supplemented with Feo’s study “Dal pius agricola” (see note 3).

declension of the noun “rusticus.” One colorful example is provided in the fourteenth-century manuscript Marciano XI, 66¹⁵:

SINGULARITER

Nom. his villanus.

Gen. huius rustici

Dat. huic tfefero (sic)

Acc. hunc furem

Voc. o latro

Abl. ab hoc depredatore

ET PLURALITER

Nom. hi maledicti

Gen. horum tristium

Dat. his mendacibus

Acc. hos nequissimos

Voc. o pessimi

Abl. ab his infidelibus

Here the term “villanus” is mockingly employed to evoke a pseudo-grammar lesson, and it is associated with base moral behaviors. The entire declension exposes a list of serious transgressions ranging from theft and depredation to fraud and infidelity. Despite a few exceptions, it was widespread to find sources that associate the term “villanus” with nouns such as “malvagio” (wicked) and “reo” (guilty), thus qualifying “rustici” or peasants through negative epithets.¹⁶ An eloquent example of this negative tendency is provided by a fourteenth-century satirical poem, “De natura rusticorum,” which associates peasants with heretics, donkeys, wolves, and dogs.¹⁷

Even Dante who favorably depicts a charming bucolic setting with a “villan ch’al poggio si riposa” (25; a peasant, resting on a hillside) in *Inferno* 26, does not refrain from using the term “villano” in its negative connotations explicitly referring to rural space.¹⁸ Perhaps one of the most aggressive attacks against the “contado” or countryside is evident in *Paradiso* 16 through Dante’s great-great grandfather

¹⁵ Cited from Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (see note 3), 28 n. 2; see also Freedman, *Images of the Peasant* (see note 3), 134.

¹⁶ As Novati notes, remarkably the anonymous author who compiled the *Destructorium vitiorum* distinguishes between the terms “villanus” and rustics, thus defending peasants and rejecting the known puns between “villano” and “villania” [boorish behavior]: “Villanus ille est qui facit villaniam, non qui in villa nascitur”; cited in Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (see note 3), 27 n. 2. In another poem entitled “Alphabeto del villano,” the author distinguishes between the “buon villan” and “quello rio” (good and evil peasant). The latter is the target of the attack; see Paul Meyer, “Dit sur les villains” (see note 2), 15–16 n. 3. These examples do not occur frequently. In fact, many Latin and vernacular poems echo the following line from this late medieval satirical poem: “O malvasio rio villano” [O wicked guilty peasant]; see Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 182.

¹⁷ Novati, *Carmina medii aevii* (see note 3), 37.

¹⁸ Throughout the *Commedia*, Dante provides other instances in which he employs imageries inspired by the rural world. For example in *Inferno* 15, through Brunetto Latini, Dante mentions the act of hoeing perhaps with slight scorn: “però giri Fortuna la sua rota / come le piace, e ‘l villan la sua marra” (95–96; Let Fortune spin her wheel just as she pleases, / let the loutish peasant ply his hoe). All citations from Dante’s *Commedia* are taken from Giorgio Petrocchi’s edition, Giorgio Petrocchi, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 2nd ed. (Florence: Le Lettere, 1994 [1966–1967]). For the English translation, I used Robert Hollander’s translation, which is also available online at the *Princeton Dante Project*, <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/> (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2011).

Cacciaguida. While nostalgically evoking the noble and homogenous Roman ancestry of Florence, he harshly condemns the infiltration of notorious families from rural to urban areas,

Ma la cittadinanza, ch'è or mista
di Campi, di Certaldo e di Fegghine,
pura vediesi ne l'ultimo artista.

Oh quanto fora meglio esser vicine
quelle genti ch'io dico, e al Galluzzo
e a Trespiano aver vostro confine,

che averle dentro e sostener lo puzzo
del villan d'Aguglion, di quel da Signa,
che già per barattare ha l'occhio aguzzo!

(49–57)

[But the city's bloodline, now mixed / with that of Campi, of Certaldo, and Figline, / was then found pure in the humblest artisan / Ah, how much better would it be / had those cities which I name remained but neighbors, / had you kept your borders at Galluzzo and Trespiano, than to have them in your midst and bear the stench / of the lout from Aguglion and of him from Signa/ who already has so sharp an eye for graft!]

Here Cacciaguida directly associates the term “villan” and the context of rural environment with stench and moral corruption. As Vittorio Dornetti has noted, the reek of rustics serves to characterize figuratively peasants as morally inferior and distinguished by a low and bestial nature.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Florentine poet uses this negative imagery to condemn the corruption of explicitly noble families from Aguglion and Signa who ruled the countryside. By strongly associating them with the fetid odor of peasants and their rural environment, he hyperbolically labels them as “stinky peasant” as well.²⁰ Dante's strategy to use the familiar connection between unpleasant smell and peasantry, which is recurrent in the tradition of the “peasant haters satire,” could be viewed as a result of prejudice against the *contadini* and the *contado*. However, it could also be understood as a technique employed by Dante in order to intensify further his mockery and condemnation against specific families that recently arrived in Florence from the countryside and were responsible for despicable actions. Indeed, the term “villano” often recurs in the *Commedia*, but Dante does not utilize it to ridicule or attack peasants directly.²¹

¹⁹ Vittorio Dornetti, “Matazone da Caligano” (see note 5), 29.

²⁰ See Corrado Barberis, “I caratteri originari del mondo rurale italiano,” *Trasformazioni delle società rurali nei paesi dell'Europa occidentale e mediterranea (secoli XIX–XX): Bilancio degli studi e prospettive di ricerca*, ed Pasquale Villani. Guida ricerca: storia (Naples: Guida, 1986), 269–88; here 272.

²¹ In many examples, Dante employs the term “villano” to target political abuses rather than to single out a predetermined social group. See for example *Purg.* 6, where in one of his most famous invectives, Dante specifically uses the term “villano” while commenting on despotic rulers “Ché le città d'Italia tutte piene / son di tiranni, e un Marcel diventa / ogni villan che parteggiando viene” (124–26, For each Italian city overflows with tyrants / and every clown that plays the

Besides poetry, various novellas offer negative and sardonic depictions of peasants through the Italian prose tradition. Both the thirteenth-century collection of tales in *Il Novellino* and other fourteenth-century texts (e.g., Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Franco Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*, and Sercambi's *Novelliere*) provide a wealth of examples of negative stereotypes about rustics.²² Some of the

partisan / thinks he is the new Marcellus). In another instance, Dante employs the term "villano" in a negative way to describe rude behaviors; see *Inf* 33, 150: "e cortesia fu lui esser villano" (and to be rude to him was courtesy). Here Dante clearly juxtaposes the term "villano" to "cortesia." Even if understood in negative terms, the term "villano" refers to Frate Alberigo, and not to peasants. As Freedman, *Images of the Peasant* (see note 3), suggests, "The contrast between *villain* and *courtois* was not necessarily structured with the peasant in mind as a direct target of satirical attack" (134). Ironically, the fifteenth-century author who wrote the *Chiose sopra Dante*, (i.e., a commentary of Dante's *Paradiso*) associates Dante to a *villano* by writing this verse at the end of the manuscript as a warning to the buyer of his book: "O tu ch'achatti i[l] libro del villano / Rendilo presto perchè gran piacere / Ne tra' chostui a cchi 'l chavi di mano (Oh you who buy the book of the rude / return it fast because so much pleasure / gained he [who wrote it] and from whom you are taking it from, my translation). A gloss placed at the margin of this verse impudently declares that Dante himself was considered a *villano* by his contemporaries: "Dante si chiamò il villano perchè e' no' lasciò a dire ad altri nulla" (Dante was named the loutish because he did not allow anybody to say anything). Cited in Giovanni Papanti, *Dante, secondo la tradizione e i novellatori* (Livorno:Francesco Vigo Editore, 1873), 115.

- ²² See Domenico Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 93–94 and Michel Plaisance, "The Relationship Between City and Country in the Short Stories of Sacchetti, Sercambi and Sermini," *Florence In the Time of the Medici: Public Celebrations, Politics, and Literature in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. and trans. Nicole Carew-Reid. Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 14 (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 119–211; and Claire Cabaillet, "La satire du *villain* à travers quelques textes du Moyen Age" (see note 3), 7. The case of Boccaccio is far more complex than other *novella* traditions. Boccaccio's *novelle* do not privilege or project a simple, one-sided depiction of rural space and peasants and do not present them as either negative or positive. In some *novelle* Boccaccio deals with the usual stereotypes about peasants being vulgar and coarse. However, he also offers a surprisingly positive representation of peasants. For example, the two tales of "Masetto da Lamporecchio" (III.1) and "Griselda" (X.10) introduce praiseworthy peasants who, as in the case of Griselda, have even become role models for others to follow. [Editor's note: see also the case of the old father in Wernher der Gartenære's *Helmbrecht*. Similarly, in many of Hans Sachs's sixteenth-century Shrovetide plays we encounter both stupid and intelligent, kind and brutal peasants, as the individual situation requires.] Instead, "Frate Cipolla" (VI. 10) and "Tofano of Arezzo" (VII.4) offer a more critical depiction of peasants as either foolish and gullible, or as rash and savage; see for instance the expression "villano matto" (crazy peasant) in the tale of Tofano of Arezzo. See also Albrecht Classen's comments about noble-minded peasants in medieval literature, including Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in his *Introduction* to this volume. Furthermore, the contrast between rural and urban realities in the *Decameron* is not as sharp as most scholars have suggested. In order to escape the plague, the seven women and three men choose to settle momentarily in the town of Fiesole in an unaffected villa in the countryside. The villa is the bucolic space appropriate for leisure that contrasts the urban working environment. Numerous scholars have proposed that Boccaccio creates a sharp tension between urban and rural spaces in order to strengthen the link between the utopian world of the countryside and the realism of the *novelle*; see for example Marga Cottino-Jones, "The City/Country Conflict in the *Decameron*," *Studi sul Boccaccio* 8 (1974): 147–84. However, Boccaccio in the introduction to the First Day also offers a very dramatic and realistic depiction of the

most common are the portrayal of *villani* as gullible, coarse, or as victims. Such depictions of rural life span also to the fifteenth and sixteenth century with Gentile Sermini's *Le Novelle* (ca. 1424) and Poggio Bracciolini's *Facezie* (1438–1452), which show the consistent radicalization of this trend throughout the medieval and early modern period.²³

Overall, the satire against peasants had a crucial cultural impact in Italy, especially if we consider that it is recurrent throughout various environments, such as the civic, religious, and even the academic. In addition, the anti-peasant satire had a significant linguistic influence in Italy, which is noticeable in current Italian language. As Corrado Barberis argues, the etymology of “contadino” and “paesano” might reflect this negative mentality because urban residents of large metropolitan areas constructed the basis of the Italian language, thus projecting their discriminations toward peasantry on linguistic terms and unfairly discounted the key role played by peasants in the making of Italy.²⁴ Indeed, in modern Italian the term “villano” holds still negative connotations as it primarily describes discourteous actions and individuals.²⁵

peasants' environment during the pestilence. Juxtaposed to the hopeless representation of plague-stricken Florence, the description of the rural background emerges just as gloomy and desolate as the city: “the surrounding countryside was not spared the bad times which affected the city. . . . Like the city-dwellers, they (peasant workers) discarded all habits and neglected their duties and their property. Indeed all of them, as soon as they realized that death was on its way, became deeply concerned, not with any future profit from their livestock and fields and from their previous labors, but with consuming immediately whatever came to hand by any means at their disposal. And so the cattle, the asses, the sheep, the goats, the pigs, the poultry, and even the dogs (such faithful companions to man), driven from their own places, roamed about freely through the fields, where the crops had been left unharvested and indeed uncut (13).” Cited from *Decameron*, trans. J. G. Nichols (New York: Everyman's Library, 2009). We should be careful when using the term “country” in the *Decameron* because Boccaccio conceives rural space in various ways, thus suggesting that when the urban and the rural realities interact, they often share similarities.

²³ Domenico Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 95; see also Claire Cabaillo, “La satire du villain” (see note 3), 7–25.

²⁴ See Corrado Barberis, “I caratteri originari del mondo rurale italiano” (see note 20), 271. Barberis provokingly states that “La lingua italiana è uno strumento del popolo urbano” (271, the Italian language is an instrument of the urban people). A more extensive overview of the question is provided by Gianfranco Contini, “La poesia rustica come caso di bilinguismo,” *Ultimi esercizi ed elzeviri* (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), 5–21.

²⁵ Unlike the English noun “villain,” which has strong moral connotations (i.e., evil), in modern Italian the noun and adjective “villano” is associated with base and uneducated behavior. See for example Lo Zingarelli 2001: *Vocabolario della lingua italiana di Nicola Zingarelli*, ed. Miro Dogliotti, Luigi Rosiello, and Paolo Valesio. 12th ed. (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2001), that defines “villano” as “zotico” (churlish), “rozzo” (rude) and “incivile” (impolite), 2020.

The “Peasant Author” Satire in Medieval Italy

While scholars have mainly focused on the anti-peasant satire, the other, parallel model of satire has been overlooked. Domenico Merlini only hints at a type of satire that he believed originated in popular culture and portrays peasants as sly victims, who even if oppressed, emerge victorious from their powerful and ruthless oppressors.²⁶ He calls this model of satire “positiva” in contrast with the one previously mentioned, which he calls “negativa.” Even though Merlini’s terminology “positiva” and “negativa” is too broad, it calls our attention to the variations of the *satira del villano* genre. According to Merlini, authors of the so-called “satira positiva” had a constructive view on rustics and rural life and are often highly sophisticated as they expressed their criticism against peasant detractors either with sarcasm or by impersonating peasants. Indeed, several authors in their satires mimic (often indirectly) peasants while ridiculing various members of upper social classes—such as the nobility, the clergy, and—at a later time—the upper middle class or merchants. In Italy this type of satire was mainly produced by jesters or *giullari* and by poets from the urban environment. By pretending to be peasants, these authors embraced rural language and culture in order to serve their own agenda.

The “Ritmo Laurenziano” (ca. 1188–1207) is one of the first known texts that could be linked to the “peasant-author” tradition. The poem dates back to the twelfth-century and was likely authored by a northern Italian jester²⁷:

Salva lo vescovo senato,²⁸
 lo mellior c’umque sia nato,
 ce [dall’]jora fue sagrato
 tutt’allumma ‘l cericato.
 Né Fisolaco né Cato

5

²⁶ Domenico Merlini links this pro-peasant tradition to the genre of the novella; see Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 3–4. Rossi in his review criticizes the two terms “positiva” and “negativa” disagreeing on the existence of such a dichotomy. Instead, he supports the likelihood of a single source that could be traced back to classical antiquity; see Russo, “Review of Merlini” (see note 7), 433. See also the negative review by Gaston Paris, Review of Merlini, *Saggio di ricerche sulla satira contro il villano*. Romania 24 (1895): 142–45; here 144. Michele Feo subtly observes that Merlini’s study neglects to explore the peasant satire authored by the nobility; see Feo, “Dal pius agricola” (see note 3), 101.

²⁷ The *Ritmo Laurenziano* is cited from *Antologia della poesia italiana: Duecento*, ed. Cesare Segre and Carlo Ossola (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 7–9, 553–54; here 7–8. This edition follows the one by Arrigo Castellani, “Il Ritmo Laurenziano,” *Studi Linguistici Italiani* 12 (1986): 182–216; see also Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del Duecento*, vol. 1 (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1960), 3–6. The English translation is mine.

²⁸ The term “senato” likely refers to the genitive “aesinatis” (i.e., “esinate”) meaning “of Iesi.” Iesi is a town in the comune of Ancona in the Marche region; see Segre and Ossola, *Antologia della poesia italiana: Duecento* (see note 27), 7.

non fue sí ringratiato,
 e 'l pap' llui [*dal destro l*]ato
 per suo drudo plú privato.
 Suo gentile vescovato
 ben'è cresciuto e melliorato. 10

L'apostolico romano
 lo [*sagroe in*] Laterano.
 San Benedetto e san Germano
 'l destinee d'esser sovrano
 de tutto regno cristiano 15
 peroe venne da Lornano,
 del paradis delitiano.
 Ça non fue ques[to] villano!
 da ce 'l mondo fue pagano
 non ci so tal marchisciano. 20

Se mi dà caval balçano,
 monsteroll' al bon toscano,
 a lo vescovo volterrano,
 cui bendicente bascio la mano (. . .)

[Bless the bishop from Iesi, / the best one who was ever born / because from the moment he was consecrated / he enlightened the entire clergy. / Neither Physiologus nor Cato / was so talented, / and (stands) on the right side of the Pope / as his closest friend. / His gallant diocese / has grown and improved well. / The Roman Pope / consecrated him in Laterano. / St. Benedict and St. Germain / assigned him to be the ruler / of the entire Christian land / because it came from Lornano, / they rejoice in Paradise. / He never was a peasant! / Ever since the world was pagan / I have never known such a Marchigiano. / If he gives me a white horse, / I will show him to the good Tuscan, / the Volterranean Bishop, / blessed by him, I kiss his hand.]

Through a flattering and rustic tone, the anonymous jester tries to convince an unidentified bishop to give him a horse, perhaps as a compensation for his service as an entertainer. In order to encourage him further, the jester says that he will show the horse to the bishop of Volterra (11–14); most likely the Bishop Ildebrandino dei Pannocchieschi.²⁹ Scholars have debated the identity of the first bishops to whom the poem is addressed, focusing specifically on the line: “Çà non fue ques[to] villano!” (18, He never was a peasant!). Most interpretations propose that the bishop in question was Villano Gaetani, Archbishop of Pisa, thus suggesting the pun on the term “villano”[peasant] with the other “Villano” [Villano Gaetani’s proper name].³⁰ If so, the author could joke on the fact that the bishop is both a “Villano” in word and deed. As Marc Cirigliano notes, the pun

²⁹ Bishop Ildebrandino dei Pannocchieschi was bishop from 1184 to 1211. See Francesco Torraca, “Su la più antica poesia Toscana,” *Rivista d'Italia* 4.1 (1901): 229–49; here 243.

³⁰ See Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del Duecento*, vol. 1 (see note 27), 4.

might reveal “the lighthearted nature of the poem, which exploits the tension between an ecclesiastic’s celestial role of pointing the way to heaven and the materially oriented tasks of running a diocese.”³¹

The most recent interpretation refutes this identification and advocates that the bishop in question was instead Grimaldesco of Iesi, as also confirmed by the adjective “senatore” (1, of Iesi).³² Even if this alternative interpretation excludes the pun Villano/villano, the poem could still be approached as an expression of a satire that is not directly hostile to peasants. The jester-author uses the term “villano” to address impudently a prominent member of the clergy who is, most likely mockingly, juxtaposed to another bishop. Furthermore, through his irreverent yet coarse language, the *giullare* seems to hint implicitly at his own humble origin, as he also acts as a subordinate (23–24), perhaps to display hyperbolically the archbishop’s superiority and reinforce his eulogy.

The tendency to employ topoi from the anti-peasant satire in order to ridicule targets other than peasants is also visible in other thirteenth-century Tuscan texts. In one of his most celebrated canzone, Guittone d’Arezzo uses the adjective “villano” associated with the term “malvagio” (evil) and “vil” (vile). As previously noted, the two terms “villano” and “malvagio” frequently recur in the anti-peasant satire.³³ However, contrary to any expectations, Guittone does not employ the expression “villano malvagio” to condemn peasants. Instead, he criticizes prominent Ghibelline citizens from Arezzo, such as politicians and judges during the turbulent Guelph and Ghibelline wars (ca. 1256–1259)³⁴:

Gente noiosa e villana
e malvagia e vil signoria
e giüdici pien’ di falsa
fanno me, lasso, la mia terra odiare
e l’altrui forte amare.

[Destructive and loutish people / and evil and vile lordship / and judges full of deceit
/ make me, alas, hate my land / and strongly love the land of others.]

Guittone’s powerful poem employs a known satirical tradition to address a different social target. While projecting his disappointment about the wickedness

³¹ Marc Cirigliano. *Melancolia Poetica, A Dual Language Anthology of Italian Poetry 1160–1560* (Leicester, UK: Troubador, 2007), 1–3; here 1.

³² See Francesco Torraca, “Su la più antica poesia Toscana,” (see note 29), 239–41. See also *Antologia della poesia italiana: Duecento* (see note 27), 7. Leo Spitzer interprets “non fue villano” as a “familiar expression of eulogy;” see his “Notes to the Text of ‘Ritmo Laurenziano,’” *Italica* 28.4 (1951): 241–48; here 242.

³³ See for example “il perfido villan, malvagio” in the poem “Alfabeto sopra li villani”; cited in Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 225.

³⁴ Cited from Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del Duecento*, Tome 1 (see note 27), 14–19. The English translation is mine.

and corruption of his compatriots, he ingeniously associates a known terminology focusing on the urban — rather than rural — reality. Guittone's contemporary poet, the thirteenth-century Florentine Rustico Filippi, also employs the term "villano" aiming at targets which do not belong to the rural environment. He rather ironically ridicules members from the nobility, and more specifically Florentine noblewomen.³⁵ He clearly denigrates them with terms that refer to the literary and cultural anti-peasant satirical tradition. One clear example is his scurrilous sonnet "Da che guerra m'avete incominciata" (Since you have waged war against me) directed at an unidentified "donna" (5, woman), likely a member of the Florentine aristocracy. The ridicule reaches its apex in the following lines: "Che foste putta il die che voi nasceste / ed io ne levai saggio ne la stalla / ché 'l culo in terra tosto percoteste," (9–11, that you were a whore the day you were born, / I figured it out in the stable / because you instantly hit your ass on the ground). As Fabian Alfie notes, "Rustico asks his female addressee to recall that he knew she was not a virgin when he pounded her bottom against the stall floor."³⁶ This association between noblewomen and stables "undoubtedly associates them with low-born peasantry rather than noblewomen."³⁷

Moreover, Cecco Angiolieri from Siena goes even a step further. While irreverently insulting his contemporaries, he explicitly declares that one of his sonnets is an example of peasant poetry: "motti non bei, ma rustichi e villani" (not refined words, but rustic and coarse).³⁸ Even if associated with the nobility, Cecco impersonates the peasant-author who launches his criticism through a low vernacular style, thus evoking the "villano." By doing so, he offers a novel perspective on the peasant author satire, because he associates it not merely with jester performers, but rather with the urban and upper-class environment.

Finally, the fourteenth-century jester Cenne della Chitarra ridicules the knight-poet Folgore da San Gimignano by performing a parody of his celebrated "Sonetti

³⁵ This is evident from the name of the female receivers of many of Rustico's sonnets (i.e., Monna Nese, or Madonna Tana) and the use of the formal pronoun "voi" — instead of the informal "tu" — when he sardonically addresses them; see Silvia Buzzetti Gallarati, *Rustico Filippi: sonetti satirici e giocosi* (Rome: Carrocci, 2005), 154, 178, and 200.

³⁶ Fabian Alfie, "Yes . . . but was it funny? Cecco Angiolieri, Rustico Filippi and Giovanni Boccaccio," *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 365–82; here 378 n. 44.

³⁷ Alfie, "Yes. . . but was it funny?" (see note 36), 378.

³⁸ The sonnet in question is "Chi dice del suo padre altro, ch'onore / la lingua gli dovrebbe esser tagliata;" (1–2, Who says to his father other things, rather than honor / should have his tongue cut); See Fabian Alfie, *Comedy and Culture: Cecco Angiolieri's Poetry and Late Medieval Society*. Italian Perspectives, 8 (Leeds, UK: Northern University Press, 2002), 141–43. Perhaps this incipit evokes Isaiah 45:10: "Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?'" Cecco is likely ridiculing both his own comic persona (as Cecco himself does in several vituperative sonnets against his own father) and also the ideology of his own contemporary (and possibly the Siense Franciscan ideology; See Fabian Alfie, *Comedy and Culture*, 129–37).

de'mesi" (Sonnets of the Months). Instead of Folgore's positive descriptions of noblemen and knightly leisure, Cenne provides a series of sonnets that hyperbolically depict the crude and depraved life of peasants. In his sonnet "Di maggio" (on May), Cenne subverts Folgore's version by substituting his peaceful and chivalrous scenery with a comic rural setting characterized by "lavoratori" (2, herdsmen), and "villan scapigliati e gridatori / de' qual' resolan sì fatti sudori, / che turben l'aire sì che mai non cagli," (6-8, peasants ruffled and loud, / who emanate such body odors, / that they trouble so much the air that it never settles).³⁹ The description continues with

altri villan poi facendovi mance
 di cipolle porrate e di marroni, 10
 usando in questo gran gavazze e ciance:
 in giù letame ed in alto forconi;
 vecchie e massai baciarsi per le guance;
 di pecore e di porci si ragioni.

[other peasants who give you as gifts / onions with warts and rapeseeds, / while
 engaging in big revelries and cackles; / manure is down and pitchforks are up; /
 old women and husbandmen kissing on the cheeks; / while discussing about
 sheep and pigs, 9-14]

While providing a vivid and colorful picture of rural life, Cenne discredits Folgore's ideals of chivalry and replaces them with the pragmatic peasant reality, characterized by unpleasant odors, noise, and coarseness. By doing so, he also fosters a dialogue between two social realities, because he juxtaposes his peasant characters with Folgore's knights. Other examples more explicitly stage the polemic interaction between *villani* and members of the bourgeoisie. The anonymous author of a *contrasto* entitled "*Astuzie de' villani sentenziose, e belle*" stages a harsh dispute between a group of craftsmen and a group of peasants.⁴⁰ Both groups share an equal space in the debate, but the peasants' remarks are placed at the conclusion of the controversy. By having the last words, they are able to ridicule and denounce persuasively the abuses of their craftsmen detractors. A further development of this trend is noticeable in theater through the comic persona of *Hellequin*: the peasant wild man who developed in French passion plays, and was later transposed to the Italian stage through the mask of *Arlecchino*.⁴¹

³⁹ Cenne's sonnet is cited from Cesare Segre and Carlo Ossola, *Antologia della poesia italiana: Duecento* (see note 27), 470. The English translation is mine.

⁴⁰ See Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 13-18. Even though these debate poems date back to the sixteenth century, it is likely that similar examples from an earlier period existed.

⁴¹ I am indebted to Dario Fo for this connection between the peasant author satire and theater, and more specifically to the later trend of the *Commedia dell'arte*. The Italian theater adapted to the stage the popular French *Hellequin*, i.e., the wild man peasant from the forest which dated back

Overall, the “peasant author” satire seems well established through a heterogeneous group of authors and performers. It shows that both jesters and poets from various environments and social groups were not only familiar with the anti-peasant literary tradition, but also employed it to launch their own sardonic attacks against different social and political targets, thus crafting an alternative satirical form. Even if the majority of these authors are not peasant, through a comic and rustic lexicon they claim to represent—more or less overtly—the literary category of “peasant authors” expressed through a model of satire that functions in conjunction with the other.

Matazone da Caligano's *Satira del villano*

Having outlined these two models of satires and their dynamics, let's now return to Matazone da Caligano. His 284 line vernacular poem “Nativitas rusticorum et qualiter deben tractari” (the birth of peasants and how one should treat them) is recorded in the late fourteenth century manuscript C. 218 inf. As evident from political and historical references, it almost certainly refers to an earlier oral jester performance, which could date back to the thirteenth or the fourteenth centuries.⁴² The author of the poem, the *giullare* Matazone (the motley fool) explicitly mentions his peasant origin and association with Northern Italy by affirming his belonging to the rural town “Caligano” (7).

Paul Meyer first found a town named “Calignano” in Lombardy, near the city of Pavia, arguing that it could be the town mentioned by Matazone.⁴³ Such a possibility is confirmed by the author's use of a hybrid dialect and poetic meter, which consign the composition to fourteenth-century Lombardy—not to mention

to medieval Passion Plays; Dario Fo (2011, September 6). *Telephone interview* (conducted and recorded by me). See also Dario Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, 2nd ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1987); translated by Joe Farrell, *Dario Fo: The Tricks of the Trade* (London: Methuen Drama, 1991); Paolo Toschi, *Le origini del teatro Italiano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1955), 196–212. See also Timothy Husband, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism*. Catalogue of an Exhibition Held at the Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980).

⁴² Matazone's poem is recorded in two folios (i.e., 54r and 54 v) that were added at the end of the MS C. 218 Inf. A late fourteenth-century hand recorded the poem, as evident from both the manuscript hand and the preceding folios, which contain the exhortations by the Vicentine author Antonio Loschi (1365–1441), “Antonii Lусi Vicentini carmen ad ducam Mediolani” (53r–v). Scholars have debated about the dating of this poem, especially in reference to the expression “leze del'imperator” (69–70, emperor's law); see Cesare Molinari “Il detto dei villani di Matazone da Caligano” (see note 5), 5 n.3; and Vittorio Dornetti, “Matazone da Caligano” (see note 5), 24 n. 12.

⁴³ Paul Meyer, “Dit sur les Vilains” (see note 2), 14. However, the manuscript clearly reads “Caligano.” It could likely be a scribal error, or perhaps Matazone's intentional distortion of the name to avoid to explicitly naming the town.

the fact that the poem is contained in a Lombard manuscript.⁴⁴ The long text could be approached as a written record of an oral, staged performance, which in the original form was expected to feature dialogues and soliloquies, as well as props and numerous characters.⁴⁵ Overall, the poem could be divided in five parts. In the first part Matazone addresses his audience and introduces himself (or his comic persona)⁴⁶:

A voy, signor e cavalier,
 Si lo conto volonter
 e a tuta bona zente,
 tuta comunamente.
 Intenditi questa raxone, 5
 la qual fe Matazone,
 e fo da Caligano
 e naque d'un vilano;
 e d'un vilano fo nato,

[To you, O lord and knight, / I would be glad to narrate / and to all the good people,
 / gathered together. / Understand this poem, / created by Matazone / who hails from
 Caligano / born as a peasant; / and of a peasant I was born. (1–9)]

By doing so, Matazone immediately associates himself with the peasant author satirical tradition. However, such alleged peasant origin is rendered problematic when he immediately downgrades it by theatrically confiding his regrets for belonging to such a low class (10). Adopting an apparently duplicitous attitude, he then praises the “cortexi” (nobles) who taught him to be a good civilized man despite his base rustic nature (11–19).

Ma no per lo so grato, 10
 pero che in vilania
 no vose aver compagnia
 se no da gli cortexi,

⁴⁴ On the bottom of 54r. there is the date which refers to the date of purchase of the manuscript, “28 Lulius, 78” [July 28 (15)78], by the Lombard educator and humanist Francesco Ciceri (1521–1596); see the *Enciclopedia italiana Treccani*: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-ciceri_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-ciceri_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (last accessed Nov. 14, 2011). See also Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 790. It is worth noting that because Matazone was a jester, he could have mimicked the Lombard dialect and meter to dramatize his performance, thus the fact that he declares to be from Caligano should also be taken with caution as it could be Matazone’s creation of a poetic performance.

⁴⁵ Cesare Molinari emphasizes the performative value of this text, and thus raises important points about the question of interpreting it without knowing the original punctuation, tone, and pauses; see his “Il detto dei villani” (see note 5), 7–8. The fact that “*nativitas rusticorum*” was first and foremost a jester performance, should be considered when attempting to date this text, which likely refers to a much earlier performance.

⁴⁶ I transcribed the poem diplomatically from the manuscript C. 218 Inf. held at the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana* in Milan, with some minor adaptations. The English translation is mine.

da chi bontà imprexi	
per bona nutritura;	15
ma fo contra natura:	
cognosenza lo vole,	
natura sì s'en dole.	
Pero no taxo miga,	
anz è mester che diga	20
costumo di vilan	
che me va per le man	

[but I am not so grateful for that, / because peasantry / never wished for company / especially the one of courteous men, / from whom I learned goodness / because of my good upbringing; / but I learned it against nature: / as culture wishes, / nature thus regrets it./ But I am not keeping quiet, / indeed it is my job to tell / about the custom of the peasant / that for me it comes in handy. (1-22)]

Here the jester seems to repudiate disrespectfully his own nature as he introduces the next sequence of his performance. This second part features a dispute, expressed in direct speech, between a "villano" and his "signore" or lord. Matazone expressively discloses the controversy through a very sarcastic tone, which is evident both in the context of the story and in the word choice. Such sarcasm renders the poem obscure, because it is not clear if Matazone completely supports the lord or takes the peasant's side. The argument is caused by the peasant's inability to share his goods with his "plan" (24, meek) lord: "Si tu que fa lo vilan / al so signor chi e plan? / El no ge daria mai tanto / chel no ge toga altrettanto" (23-26, Do you know what the peasant does / to his meek lord? / He would not ever give him more / if he does not take as much).

In other words, the peasant would not give more to his lords unless he takes from him something of equal value.⁴⁷ Once the lord does not meet the villano's "socialist" claim, the latter complains directly in front of him (27-30). He reminds his lord how the master's father and ancestors were much fairer than he (31-32), and finally threatens to leave him because he is sure that with God's help, he will certainly find a more honorable master (37-40). During this dynamic exchange, a third character is then introduced, a "vilana" or female peasant. The jester was probably responsible for performing the scene by himself, acting out all the three characters. It is notable that Matazone continues to interrupt the action with his own cunning and mordant remarks:

Zò sedeva una vilana
 chi petenava stopa on lana;
 el signor per lì pasava
 et ela l'ovra lasava;

⁴⁷ Molinari interprets these lines differently, believing that the peasant is accused of robbing his lord; see Molinari, "Il detto dei villano" (see note 5), 10-11.

al cel leva le mane, 45
 con bocha dixè plane:
 "Meser, vendeta fay
 de colu che va lay."
 Ma unca De no faza
 che tal cosa Ie plaza, 50
 che nesun zentil homo
 habia ni sì ni como,
 ni mala nominanza,
 s'el no fose ferù de lanza
 in stormo on in batalia. 55
 De quela no m'en calia!
 Ma lo signor comandava
 e con furor parlava:
 "Piate quello vilano,
 ligatege le mano, 60
 metitel in presone! (. . .)

[Down below was sitting a female peasant / who was teasing tangled wool; / the lord was there passing by / and she interrupted her work; / rose her hands to heaven, / through her lips softly said: / "Lord, cast your vengeance / toward him who goes there." / But God does nothing but / what He pleases, / so that no courteous man / gets any evil / neither bad reputation, / unless he gets wounded by a spear/ during war or in battle. / Of that one I do not care! / But the lord commanded / and was talking with furor: / "Seize that peasant, / bind his hands, / put him in jail !" (41–61)]

After the villano's reproach, his supposedly meek master angrily orders his imprisonment. The brief intermission of the female peasant could serve as a device to release the tension between the two characters, but it is introduced in very graphic terms.⁴⁸ In addition, Matazone observes the scene, apparently taking the side of the lord, and clearly dismisses her by saying "De quela no m'en calia!" (56, of that one I do not care).⁴⁹ However, the role of her curse is ambiguous because it powerfully disrupts the course of the narration. Even though she puts a curse on the lord in a very discreet way, the public hears her petition that is directed toward God. Finally, the author suggests that any act of vengeance cast by men is ultimately futile (49–55), yet the lord paradoxically engages in his own act of vengeance against the peasant when he seizes him. This intriguing sketch is rendered even more problematic by the lord's justification for the imprisonment of his *villano*:

⁴⁸ As Molinari also observes, unlike the lord, she is described very vividly and accurately, since the author specifies not only her action, but also her attitude. Molinari also believes that she was meant to be an old peasant woman; however, this supposition is not supported anywhere in the story; see Molinari "Il detto dei villani" (see note 5), 12.

⁴⁹ However, the pronoun "quela" (that one) could also refer to the noun "lanza" (spear).

“Che questo chi vol la leze
de l'imperador dire,
che lo vilan e lo feo
de eser tuto meo
e d'ogni bon signore
chi se manten a honore.”

70

[“Because this is what the law / of the emperor means, / that the peasant and the fiefdom / must be all mine / and of every good lord / who preserves his honor.” (69–74)]

The lord invokes the “leze de l'imperatore” (69–70, emperor's law), explicitly alluding to the *Leges augustales* or *Constitutions of Melfi*: A law-code promulgated in August 1231 by the self-proclaimed *Imperator Romanorum* Frederick II. Scholars have noted that this reference could suggest that the poem emerged from the thirteenth-century feudal tradition, but it also confirms that the poem likely circulated in Lombardy during the fourteenth and even fifteenth centuries during the pro-imperial rule of the Visconti Dynasty.⁵⁰ The *Leges augustales* introduced new regulations pertaining to the “servitù della gleba” or serf practice applied to territories “populated by Lombards, Greek and even non-Christians.”⁵¹

These regulations aimed at eliminating special privileges of the nobility and ensured the “protection of the defenceless against seizure or usurpation” and in particular safeguarded “the peasant, whose ability to defend his right to land was weakest.”⁵² Furthermore, since the mid-thirteenth century, various northern *comuni* abolished the serf practices and a new type of contractual system developed. It was called the *mezzadria* “under which the peasant and the landowner each received 50 percent of the produce.”⁵³ Besides the “emperor law,” even local Lombard statutes prohibited lords from burdening and oppressing

⁵⁰ Cesare Molinari states that the “leze de l'imperatore” reference suggests that the poem likely emerges in the thirteenth century; see his “Il detto dei villani,” (see note 5), 5 n.3. Instead, Vittorio Dornetti believes that this allusion confirms that the poem likely related to the both fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Lombardy, because the Visconti Lords associated themselves with the empire as evident from their title of “vicari imperiali,” which evoked Frederick II's imperial legacy; see Dornetti “Matazone da Caligano” (see note 5), 24 n. 12. In my opinion, both possibilities are plausible because the jester's performance could rightly apply to both periods. Thus, the poem was most likely authored during the thirteenth century and continuously performed, perhaps with variations, throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

⁵¹ David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 203.

⁵² Abulafia, *Frederick II* (see note 51), 139.

⁵³ See Jane Laurent, “The Peasant in Italian Agrarian Treatises,” *Agricultural History* 58.4 (1984): 565–83; here 565. If we consider the *mezzadria* tradition, the verses in which the rustic expresses his desire to receive equal share from his lord assume a different value: “no ge daria mai tanto / chel no ge toga altrettanto” (25–26, He would not ever give him more / if he does not take as much).

peasants.⁵⁴ If we consider these historical and legal developments, the lord's statement seems highly controversial—and even unlawful—especially his autocratic interpretation of the law, which in his view means that “lo vilan e lo feo / de' eser tuto meo” (71–72, the peasant and the fiefdom / must be all mine).

After this provocative statement, the jester resumes his ambiguous monologue and reiterates that due to his unabashed nature, only the *villano* is to blame for this dispute. The poem continues with a third part, which describes the shameful nativity of the peasant, born from the flatulence of a donkey:

Ma lo vilan pur se rampogna,	75
per ch'el no se vergogna,	
ché s'el se vergognase	
e ben se perpensase	
e avese in memoria	
como fo l'istoria	80
de soa natevità,	
voyo che vu intenda:	
Là zoxo, in uno hostero,	
sì era un somero;	
de dré sì' fé un sono	85
sì grande come un tono:	
de quel malvaxio vento	
nascè el vilan puzolento.	

[But the peasant even if he reproaches, / because he does not feel shame, / if only he were ashamed / and reflected well / and remembered / how was the story / of his nativity, / I want you all to get this straight: / Down there, in an hostel, / there was a donkey; / from behind he made a sound / as loud as thunder: / From that evil wind / was born the stinky peasant. (75–88)]

Here Matazone, through his insolent remark, perhaps intended to recreate a parody of Genesis 1.2, since the “vento” or wind derisively reechoes the spirit of God that created Adam.⁵⁵ The fact that the setting of this nativity is also an

⁵⁴ See for example the 1243 Vercelli Statute, regulated by Lombard law, which in *De libertade et franchitione hominum et rusticorum* prohibited nobles from burdening peasants with taxes and oppressions; cited in Corrado Barberis, “I caratteri originari del mondo rurale italiano” (see note 20), 273.

⁵⁵ For more on the connection between farts and Genesis, see Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 64. An interesting variation of the theme of farts in relation to peasants is in Rutebeuf's fabliaux where a devil mistakes a peasant's fart for his soul and brings it to hell in a sack; “no one can tell the difference between a churl's soul and his fart, so debased is peasant nature.” Cited in Allen, *On Farting*, 67. For more information on the relation between fabliaux and peasant satire, see Penny Simons's contribution to this volume, “Rural Space and Transgressive Space in *Bérenger au lonc cul*.” The old French thirteenth-century fabliaux *Bérenger au lonc cul* could be juxtaposed to another French poem, the eleventh-century comic Latin elegiac poem “De lombardo et limaca” (the

“osteria” or inn and his father is a donkey, suggests that peasants are associated with being idle, a topos that was recurrent in the anti-peasant tradition.⁵⁶ The link between rustics and donkeys is further reinforced in the subsequent lines, when the jester swears that his words:

ch’ele son tute verità,
 che nesun asino che sia
 may no va solo per la via,
 che un vilan on doy
 no ge vada da poy;
 e valo confortando
 e sego rasonando,
 pero che son parenti
 e nati d’una zente:

120

[they are all true, / because a true donkey / never goes alone in the street, / without being paired to a peasant / who follows behind him; and goes comforting him / and conversing with him, / because they are relatives / and born from the same people. (116–124)]

Matazone then introduces the rustic character once more. He later declares that the donkey is his brother (125). By looking further in the original manuscript, one can see how this alleged parental relationship is even more dramatized through a Latin poem transcribed at the bottom of the last folio—immediately after “Nativitas rusticorum.” This poem, entitled “Testamentum domini asini nostri” (The Will of Our Lord Donkey), stages a male and female peasants mourning for a donkey.⁵⁷ The presence of this poem additionally reinforces this comical association and demeans his origin. The inferiority of the *villano* is also affirmed by the disclosure of his simple diet (comprised of raw rye bread, beans, and garlic,

Lombard and the snail), which narrates the story of a Lombard peasant who prepares for a battle against a snail; cited in Feo, “Dal pius agricola” (see note 3), 102–03. The text is also recorded in six thirteenth-century Italian manuscripts; see Francesco Novati, “Il lombardo e la lumaca,” *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 22 (1893): 335–53. These two French texts could be associated with Matazone’s “Nativitas rusticorum” because both are set in Lombardy.

⁵⁶ The identification of the term “hostero” with the inn is evident in Giuseppe Bonghi, *Arcaismi del Due-Trecento*, available online, http://www.classicitaliani.it/glossari/glossario_medioevo_02.htm (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2011). Paul Freedman also translates the term “hostero” with “inn”; see his *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (see note 3), 354–55 n. 78. However, Gianfranco Contini, interprets the term “hostero” as simply meaning “casa” or house; see his *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 793 n.83. For the connection between peasants and idleness, see Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 32 n.1.

⁵⁷ Paul Meyer transcribed the poem; see his “Dit sur les vilains” (see note 2), 26–27. The scribe who transcribed the poem recorded that it is from “mediolani” or Milan. It is a satirical text set as a funeral litany, where the main response is “Oe! Oe!! Morieris, asine!” (Alas! Alas! You will die o donkey!), Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 218 Inf, fol. 54v. After a series of funeral eulogies, the two peasants finally deliver the donkey’s corpse to a wolf.

97–102) and wear (coarse canvas, simple trousers and shirt wrapped in a cord, 103–07) with certainty.

The fourth part of the “*Nativitas rusticorum*” contrasts the *villano*’s slanderous nativity to the one of a knight. The nativity of the *cavaliere* is described as the encounter between a rose and a lily in a beautiful garden. This description promotes not only the social but also biological superiority of the *cavaliere* over his subjects. However, as Matazone previously has done with the *signore*, he seems to ridicule the *cavaliere* as well when he reacts to a rustic who insists in knowing if he was born wearing silk (134–38):

El cavaler respondeva:
 “Dirotelo volontera
 zo che io ne sayo
 e que veduto n’ayo.

[The knight answered: / “I will gladly tell you / for what I know / and what I have seen. (146–48)]

The knight’s credibility comes into question because the *cavaliere* responds by repeating negative expressions such as “ne sayo” (literally—I do not know) and “n’ayo” (literally—I do not have). Similarly to the previous expression, “De quela no m’en calia!” (56, of that one I do not care!), this phrasing suggests that perhaps the knight does not fully know the details of his own nativity, as he probably was not even there.⁵⁸ In addition, he mentions that once he is born he is escorted by “sete polzele ordinate: / Zoya e Alegrezza, / Prodeza e Largheza, / Beleza e Ardire” (194–97, seven orderly maidens: Joy and Happiness/ Valiance and Munificence,/ Beauty and Courage) who give him the peasant as a gift (207–10). The number “sete” (seven) suggests an immediate reference to the “Seven Heavenly Virtues” that are allegorically depicted as maidens.⁵⁹ However, the *cavaliere* names only six of them. Scholars have corrected this anomaly by changing the number “sete” to “six”, but the number “sete” is clearly visible in the manuscript.⁶⁰ Molinari first noted this discrepancy and argued that it could be intentional as the *cavaliere* mixed the moral categories of the cardinal virtue (i.e., courage) with worldly and

⁵⁸ Molinari notes that since we do not possess the original punctuation and the jester tone for these lines, we can only speculate on the irony and sarcasm contained in the poem, which can only be inferred through a live performance; Molinari, “Il detto dei villani” (see note 5), 7–8. Furthermore, the question of the peasant could be easily read with an irreverent tone, especially if we consider the very popular motto coined by John Ball during the peasant revolt of 1381 in England, “When Adam delved and Eve span, where was the gentleman?” cited in Feo, “Dal pius agricola” (see note 3), 107.

⁵⁹ See Beatriz Scaglia, *The Seven Heavenly Virtue: Exploring the Elements of Goodness Contrasting the Seven Deadly Sins* (Webster’s Digital Services, 2011).

⁶⁰ Contini’s standard edition modified the number “seven” to “six” to stay coherent with the context; see his *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 798 n.193.

mundane ones (i.e., beauty and munificence), and thus he becomes rather unreliable.⁶¹ Such evident mystification further discredits the knight and his character. As previously noted, the jester's position toward nobility seems here again as ambiguous as his position toward peasantry.

The last part of the poem exposes what the lord should "rightfully" take from the *villano*. As Paul Freedman summarizes, "in February, at Carnival, seize a capon from him every day. In March, make him work in the vineyards and prohibit his wearing shoes. In June demand a day of labor service each week."⁶² As a mock-liturgical calendar in a *Book of Hours*, the list continues, covering meticulously each month of the year.⁶³ In December, the lord should snatch from him the whole pig, but leave him some sausages—not all of them because they are expensive—and he should not even think of giving him the fat ham (215–24). In June, during the cherry month, the lord should grant him a free day of work and make him look for his hearty vinegar and give it to him (247–54). In September, in order to make him rest, he ought to make the peasant pick grapes, squeeze them, and give the marc to him so that he can make thin wine and never get inebriated (259–66). In the chilly November, he must not let him rest. Instead, he should send him to gather wood, thus making him constantly carry logs upon his shoulders; if he comes by the fire, he needs to send him away (273–82). The jester lastly concludes this *tour de force* with the lapidary remark: "E con questa fatica / el mal vilan se castiga" (283–84, and with this hard work / one punishes the evil peasant).

Because of its hyperbolic language and irreverent content, scholars have generally interpreted this poem as a diatribe against peasants and as such the earliest Italian example of the so-called *satira del villano*. The poem indeed addresses noblemen, or more precisely the archetypes of a "signore" and a "cavaliere," thus creating a clear qualitative distinction between peasants and noblemen as evident from the contrasting imageries of their two nativities. Thus Matazone could have composed such a piece in order to gain the favors of the

⁶¹ Molinari, "Il detto dei villani" (see note 5), 15–16. He also provides additional evidence to show how the enumerated virtues are recurrent in other sources, such as Brunetto Latini's *Il Tesoretto*, Giovanni Quirini's sonnet "Segnor ch'avete di pregio la corona", and Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*. He notices how all these sources mention the virtue of *Cortesía*, which is missing in Matazone's list.

⁶² Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasants* (see note 3), 147. These tasks of the rustic are listed from lines 229 to 240.

⁶³ This portion of the poem could be read as an explicit parody of a Book of Hours liturgical calendar. For more information on the Book of Hours and the peasant tradition, see Albrecht Classen's contribution in this volume, "Rural Space in Late Medieval Books of Hours." Codicological evidence also suggests that this section of the poem was not merely a list of peasant duties, but a parody of liturgical texts. Matazone's poem is placed a few folios after the religious treatise "In singulos anni dies festos disticha," which lists all the months of the year with the respective feasts and religious observations; See BA C. 218 Inf, fols. 52r–52v (see note 42).

“segnor” and “cavaler.”⁶⁴ However, if we carefully examine the *salutatio* at the opening of the poem, Matazone seems to address his poem not only to a selected audience, but also a wider and more mixed group:

A voy, segnor e cavaler,
si lo conto volonter
e a tuta bona zente,
tuta comunamente.

[To you, O lord and knight, / I would be glad to narrate / and to all the good people,
/ gathered together. (1–4)]

The *salutatio* of the poem clearly sorts out a nobleman and a knight, but also a crowd of people (3, gente) who are most likely the jester’s audience. The term “comunemente” (4) seems to evoke a municipal setting or “comune.” If the performance occurred in a square, the target audience could have comprised of both members of the upper class and of “tuta bona zente” (all the good people). Matazone’s incipit is recurrent in jester poetry where the term often implies either a whole community or a crowd of people from the low and middle class.⁶⁵

This unidentified group is unequivocally distinguished from the previous one, as evident from the conjunction “e” (3, and). Most likely it could consist of people distinctively different from “segnor” and “cavaler,” namely, peasants. Jesters generally performed in courts, but following the process of urbanization in fourteenth-century Italy, they more frequently performed in local plazas to townspeople and members from the rural community. A passage from a more contentious poem “O malvasio rio villano” (Oh evil criminal peasant) confirms such a possibility.

The author of the poem, ascribed in the manuscript to Cecco d’Ascoli, mocks peasants because they devoutly attend jesters’ performances but unashamedly avoid priests’ sermons.⁶⁶ Other sources confirm the possibility that jesters

⁶⁴ This is also Domenico Merlini’s conclusion about the poem; Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 6.

⁶⁵ Molinari provides various examples to show how the term “signori and cavalieri” was generally used to approach a vast public, while “bona gente” often refers to a crowd of low or middle social rank; However, he does not believe that the poem could be ascribed to a certain, specific public; see Molinari, “Il detto dei villani” (see note 5), 8–9. The fourteenth-century jester Buccio di Ranallo uses a strikingly similar beginning to his poem, which is geared toward the whole community: “Signuri, bona gente.” He explicitly specifies that with the term “bona gente,” he alludes to merchants and whoever cannot read Latin; see Maria Luisa Lombardo, “Appendix/ Appendice. Nobili, mercanti e popolo minuto negli atti dei notai romani del xiv e xv secolo,” *Sources of Social History: Private Acts of the Late Middle Ages*. Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 5 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 291–310; here 308.

⁶⁶ Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 182. Molinari mentions that jesters often created performances to delight various citizens and peasants both in public squares and villages; see Molinari, 8. Furthermore, various northern-Italian statutes confirmed this practice as they

performed in front of peasants and “popolani” and so achieved success.⁶⁷ If such a heterogeneous group truly constituted the target audience of the poem, its inherent ambiguity seems perhaps more well suited to please the entire audience. Furthermore, in the last part of his poem, Matazone lists an excessively boisterous list of obligations to which rustics must abide. The scholar, Cesare Molinari, observes that there is ambiguity in this part mainly because of its witty and sardonic tone. Other scholars also state that “even if the peasants are at first sight the objects of the satire, the sarcasm is directed with great subtlety at the nobility.”⁶⁸ At times the abuse experienced by the peasants seems to have biblical references, especially if we consider the allusion to vinegar (250–53), which brings to mind Jesus’ tribulation on the cross. Similarly to Molinari, the influential philologist Gianfranco Contini also expressed some reservation about placing this poem under the category of anti-peasant satire.

Having analyzed the linguistic register of Matazone, he concludes that the poem indeed features the social contrasts between peasants and noblemen, but such a relation is rendered problematic by the jester’s low linguistic register and his alleged belonging to the peasant world. By proclaiming himself as being a rustic and by providing a detailed description of the peasant’s adversity, Matazone describes the tragic condition of his people thus supporting its cause and indirectly denouncing noblemen’s abuses.⁶⁹

Overall, I believe that we should reconsider this poem’s placement within the anti-peasant satire. I would also be cautious in ascribing this poem to a pro-peasant satire, especially if we consider the deceptive role played by Matazone himself. Even if at first he introduces himself as a modest peasant at first, he then switches to a caustic peasant detractor, consistently undermining the credibility of the “cortexi” (13, noblemen and knights) with whom he wishes to be associated. Perhaps, Dario Fo’s adaptation could provide an alternative reading to this multifaceted poem.

sanctioned jesters for their public performances in the streets. The Siense Statute implemented numerous sanctions against “giollari” or jesters and anyone who was directly associated with them; see for example M. S. Elsheikh, *Il costituito del comune di Siena volgarizzato nel MCCCIX–MCCCX.3* vols. (Siena: Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 2002), 329 and 331–32.

⁶⁷ Franco Suitner mentions that the thirteenth-century Iberian jester Martin Soares ridicules a fellow poet because he pleases peasants and “popolani” or members of the lower social class; see his *I poeti del medio evo: Italia ed Europa (secoli XII–XIV)* (Rome: Carocci, 2010), 82.

⁶⁸ Costantino Maeder, “Mistero Buffo: Negating Textual Certainty, the Individual, and Time,” *Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Antonio Scudieri (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 65–79; here 76–77.

⁶⁹ Contini, *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 790.

Dario Fo's Matazone and the Pro-Peasant *Satira del villano*

In 1969, the playwright and actor Dario Fo first staged *Mistero Buffo* (The Comic Mysteries), an innovative performance based on medieval jester sources such as the "Nascita del villano" (the birth of the peasant), which had been inspired by the "Nativitas rusticorum."⁷⁰ Since this first performance, it is estimated that about forty million people throughout the world have seen *Mistero Buffo*. Matazone's poem thereby gained worldwide attention perhaps as no other medieval text.⁷¹ Surprisingly, such an exposure has not favored a revival of this text. On the contrary, only a handful of studies exist today on Matazone's poem. Modern literary scholars generally overlook Fo's adaptation with respect to its inspiration. This dismissal is possibly due to the scholars' overall assessment of Fo's version, which is considered untrustworthy.⁷² I believe that this conclusion must be reconsidered. Fo's contribution to the understanding of "Nativitas rusticorum" must be addressed in order to gain a wider understanding of the ambiguous humor and tensions that characterize this challenging poem. Above all, this popular one-man show highlights Matazone's text as a performance and vibrantly presents it to a modern audience on a practical level.

In his *Mistero Buffo*, Fo reconstructs a new version of the poem by adding original portions from other more recent sources, such as various "proverbi e tiritere" (proverbs and rhymes).⁷³ Through his revision, he provides a new perspective on the poem, arguing that Matazone's poem is an example of a refined type of satire written by a jester and inspired by rural and popular cultures. In other words, through this activism, Matazone employs irony in order to support exploited peasants and to denounce their abusive landowners. Fo believes that the jester conceals this schema through an apparent condemnation of peasants, while in reality he truly aims at criticizing the nobles' brutality and egoism. As a result, the performance becomes an instrument to foster a social debate within the community. Through this alternative perspective, Fo suggests that the medieval

⁷⁰ See Tom Behan, *Dario Fo: Revolutionary Theatre* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000), 99.

⁷¹ Tony Mitchell, *Dario Fo, People's Court Jester* (London and New York: Meuthen, 1984), 10.

⁷² Among the cited studies recently devoted to Matazone's text, only Vittorio Dornetti addresses Dario Fo's adaptation. He briefly mentions it in a footnote dismissing it as "assai infida" (rather unreliable); Dornetti, "Matazone da Caligano" (see note 5), 36–37 n. 45.

⁷³ Fo states that for his version of Matazone's poem he inserted extracts from more recent proverbs and rhymes, specifically focusing on more derogatory ones: "Io mi sono rifatto ai proverbi e alle tiritere forse più recenti . . . nei quali c'erano dentro lo sfottò al contadino . . . che era un modo per lanciarsi contro l'egoismo, la brutalità e la violenza dei signori fingendo di prenderne adirittura la difesa dei signori contro i poveri contadini" (I based it on proverbs and rhymes, perhaps those most recent . . . in which there was the tease against the peasant . . . that was a way to lunge oneself against the egoism, the brutality and the violence of the noblemen pretending to protect them against the poor peasant); cited from Dario Fo (2011, September 6). *Telephone interview*.

jester promotes a type of satire made exclusively *by* and *for* peasants rather than a satire *against* them.

Like Fo, other scholars have also supported the militant role of the medieval jester within his own society.⁷⁴ However, some have opposed Fo's view of a pro-peasant jester. In particular, the journalist and critic of the influential newspaper *L'Unità*, Arturo Lazzari, strongly criticized Fo's *Mistero Buffo* as inaccurate. According to Lazzari, Matazone was not a jester who supported peasants. On the contrary, he believes that Matazone was likely an author associated with the urban environment who conversely intended to criticize them.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Costantino Maeder also questioned Fo's manipulation of the original medieval source and focused on the fact that he "reduces the 'Detto' to the second part alone. Both the argument between the peasants and the lords and the section on the birth of the nobles are cut out."⁷⁶ Fo acknowledges that he excluded these scenes for no particular reasons, but without them the poem truly suffers a major loss, because it lacks its original ambiguity and complexity.⁷⁷

Whether Matazone sided with peasants or nobleman, or whether he was truly from the *contado* or the city, it is hard to tell. Besides, reflecting on Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo* steers us to focus on wider issues. Even though Fo admirably emphasizes the rural origin and irony of Matazone, his interpretation does not come to terms with the two cultural traditions of the "anti-peasant" and "peasant-author" satires. Furthermore, it does not emphasize the possibility that both peasants and members from the high and middle class could have been the poem's target audience. Thus, Fo's approach could be enriched when considering sociological implications and historical aspects of the time, such as the clash between rural and urban spaces. In fact, authors who were not of the peasant class often wrote satires because they opposed peasant's infiltration into the city.

Unlike French and German satires, the Italian *satira del villano* originated not only from the courtly tradition but also from popular culture and widely circulated in the urban environment as evident from the wealth of proverbs and sayings about the *villano's* slyness and deceitfulness. While in France and Germany there exists a wealth of texts written by nobles against peasants, in Italy this clash

⁷⁴ Cesare Molinari compares the role played by jesters in the Middle Ages to the role played today by our modern mass media, from newspaper to television broadcasts; see Molinari, "Il detto dei villani" (see note 5), 5–6.

⁷⁵ See Luigi Allegri, *Dario Fo, dialogo provocatorio sul comico, il tragico, la follia e la ragione* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1990), 128–29.

⁷⁶ Costantino Maeder suggests that Fo intentionally eliminated these scenes perhaps to support his ideological framework; Maeder, "Mistero buffo" (see note 68), 77.

⁷⁷ Dario Fo explains why he did not include other scenes originally present in "Nativitas rusticorum": "No, non c'è nessuna ragione; a me interessava in principio questa trovata geniale di fare nascere il villano come incrocio fra l'asino e l'uomo" (There is no particular reason; at first my main focus was the genius idea of the nativity of the peasant and his mixed nature split between man and donkey); cited from Dario Fo (2011, September 6). *Telephone interview*.

is not as prominent. The great majority of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts displays the tensions between urban Italian craftsmen and countrymen who transferred in cities.⁷⁸ This phenomenon, as Merlini noted, developed as a literary and cultural trend within an urban context and its implications vary from *comune* to *comune* according to geographical locations and legal implications.

Moreover, authors who were not peasants wrote texts not exclusively against them. Instead, they imitated peasant language introducing themselves as *villani*. Members of all social classes from the nobility to the bourgeoisie, and to the clergy (like Cecco Angiolieri, Rustico Filippi, and Guittone d'Arezzo) employed a comparable style and lexicon in their poems in order to ridicule different targets.⁷⁹ This shows that a varied group of authors exploited known topoi to attack their own targets, but also—as likely occurs in Matazone's case—denounced various abuses. Starting from the mid-thirteenth century, various northern *comuni* like Bologna and Florence abolished the serf practices and introduced the contract of *mezzadria*. Such a switch from the more stable but less fair “contratto a livella” in use during the high Middle Ages to the less stable but more fair “contratto di mezzadria” caused bitter controversies in northern Italy, as evident both in fictional and legal sources.⁸⁰

In the case of Matazone's “*raxone*,” set in Lombardy, the clash between rural and urban spaces reached its peak with the Lordship of the Visconti. The Visconti enforced the *mezzadria* contract that promoted more equitable conditions between peasants and noblemen. Several factors contributed to this support. The Visconti family wielded more control in the countryside not merely to supervise and enforce justice, but eventually to gain control and to subdue the substantial rural estates, which were under ecclesiastic and aristocratic rule.⁸¹ Similar economic interests were also present in urban areas. In various Lombard and Tuscan *comuni*, citizens secured peasants' interest and held members of the nobility liable for any abuses perpetrated against them.

This strategy was motivated by the fact that the city bourgeoisie needed peasants' labor for their own interests, thus it encouraged the peasants' migration toward urban centers.⁸² As evident from various statutes, the urban law defended

⁷⁸ Merlini, *La satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 6–7.

⁷⁹ Among the already cited poets, the Milanese Bovensin della Riva (and his “*Carmina de mensibus Tractato dei Mesi*”) should also be added; Contini, *Poeti del Duecento* (see note 4), 798 n. 213.

⁸⁰ See Bruno Andreolli, *Contadini su terre di signori. Studi sulla contrattualistica agraria dell'Italia medievale*, Bruno Andreolli and Massimo Montanari. Biblioteca di storia agraria medievale, 16 (Bologna: CLUEB, 1999), 20–26.

⁸¹ Andrea Gamberini, “Il contado di Milano nel Trecento,” *Contado e città in dialogo: Comuni urbani e comunità rurali nella Lombardia medievale*, ed. Luisa Chiappa Mauri, Quaderni di Acme 62 (Milan: Cisalpino Istituto Editoriale Universitario, 2003), 87.

⁸² Gino Luzzatto, *Dai servi della gleba agli albori del capitalismo*, Collezione storica, vol. 1 (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1966), 160. As evident with the previous example of Dante's Paradiso 16, urban areas greatly developed due to peasants' infiltration in the city. This is also evident from earlier periods,

rustics from noblemen in the countryside, but subjected them to a rigid control and unfair conditions in the city. A peasant who offended a citizen was liable twice as much compared to his victim, who typically was eligible to retaliate without consequences.⁸³ In addition, peasants who lived in the urban environment were subject to heavy taxation, were unable to sell their goods freely, and were excluded from political life.⁸⁴ If we consider these sociopolitical and legal interests, the last part of Matazone's poem appears problematic. In fact, even though the *villano* jester encourages noblemen to take full possession of the peasants' share and cheat them, it is evident that this practice was not endorsed by the law and thus constituted a breach of contract between the two parties in question. However, if we believe that Matazone was associated with the urban environment and its interests, we should then be careful in concluding that the poem proposes to improve simply peasants' livelihood.

Conclusion

While reading Matazone's exquisite and complex text, we should keep in mind the resourcefulness of his satire. His satire seems not to favor only one side and one social group. For this reason, we should consider the dynamic infiltration and mystification of two equivalent models of satire that are most likely at play within the "Nativitas rusticorum." We should rethink the way we read satirical texts about peasants from the so-called *satira del villano* genre. If we consider the coexistence of two satirical traditions within each poem, we would gain a more multi-faceted approach that would help us to understand and appreciate their complexity. In addition, performance and mimicry both play an important role in the poem, while its likely heterogeneous audience who thrived in its contradictions was invited to respond to the numerous sarcastic and satirical allusions and innuendoes, ultimately recognizing itself in this poetic mirror.

Finally, we should not ignore the nickname of the jester-author "Matazone" (the motley fool). The mad-jester creates a narrative that defuses logic and law, making it still relevant to us today. He is perhaps not only playing the part of the fool, but also representing the allegory of the *matto* as a comic persona that emerged from

as for example in the city today known as Massa Lombarda. Massa was founded in 1251 following the infiltration of 87 Lombard peasant families from Marmirolo near Mantova into the uncultivated land of *Massa S. Pauli*, located near Imola. The settlement was first called *Massa* and then *Massa longobardorum*; see Mario Tabanelli, *Una città di Romagna nel Medio evo e nel Rinascimento*. Avvenimenti e uomini di Romagna (Brescia: Magalini, 1980).

⁸³ In the statute of Florence, peasants were sanctioned twice than citizens. In the city of Ravenna they were sanctioned four times more than citizens; see Merlini, *Satira contro il villano* (see note 3), 11.

⁸⁴ Feo, "Dal pius agricola" (see note 3), 100 n. 25.

medieval popular culture. As Jan Hokenson notices the medieval fool tradition combines

the blessed innocence of the child, the naïf, the idiot sacred to Christ, whose comic *ignorantia* gave license to the level the vain pretensions of philosophy and theologians, with the grotesque blasphemy of the saturnalian, the profaner, the unrepentant sensualist mocking all mortal authority on this stage of fools, his own first and last.⁸⁵

Besides this subversive value, the fool also represented “normative social value, for one of his comic function is to castigate profiteering protests and lawless barons, all the foolish abusers of social rank and right.”⁸⁶ Hence the fool is a living paradox; he is both revolutionary and reactionary, as he stands beyond and within social structures and traditions. From his privileged position he shows his façade of infallibility in a confused world. He is charming, wise, learned, yet erratic and plain. As his iconography suggests, he resembles a humble Christ through his simple clothes, but he also has the look of the savage man with a bizarre feather crown. As Cecilia Trocchi suggested, Giotto’s fourteenth-century allegorical representation of the *stultitia* in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua is the precursor of the fool (see Fig.1).⁸⁷ Giotto’s depictions become the source for the representation of the *matto* in one of the first Italian tarots commissioned in Milan by the Visconti family in the late fifteenth century (see Fig.2). As both images demonstrate, the Matto/Matazone evokes rustics and peasantry but also instability — opposed to the exemplary virtue of prudence. Matazone is then the variable “joker” card that has authority but is also at the mercy of his audience, the players, as the original tarot was created to amuse “signori” and “cavalieri.”⁸⁸ At the end, it depends on the players and what they have in their hands, but most importantly, it is how they decide to play the game.

⁸⁵ Jan Hokenson, *The Idea of Comedy: History, Theory, Critique* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 152.

⁸⁶ See Hokenson, *The Idea of Comedy* (see note 85), 152.

⁸⁷ Cecilia Gatto Trocchi, *I Tarocchi*. Il sapere: Enciclopedia Tascabile 74, ed. Roberto Bonchio (Rome: Tascabili Economici Newton, 1995), 88.

⁸⁸ The term used to refer to tarot was “le carte da trionphi” as evident from a 1442 record from the *Registro dei Mandati* in Ferrara, which also mentions that the tarot were supposed to amuse knights and noblemen; Trocchi, *I Tarocchi* (see note 87), 9.



Fig. 1. Foolishness (*Stultitia*) (1303–1305). Giotto, the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua
Photographed by the author from Angelo Rubini's photograph printed in
Giotto: The Frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, ed. Giuseppe Basile
(Milan: Skira, 2002), 394.



Fig. 2. The Fool (ca. 1460–1470). Bonifacio Bembo, Visconti-Sforza Tarot. Photographed by the author from Gertrude Moakley, *The Tarot Cards Painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti-Sforza Family; an Iconographic and Historical Study* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1966), 113.

Chapter 19

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“Lazarus and Abraham, our Jews of Eggenburg”: Jews in the Austrian Countryside in the Fourteenth Century

“It never entered my mind to live in a village without minyan and prayer,” a Jewish woman in one of the *responsa* of Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg ob der Tauber (ca. 1250–1293), the famous thirteenth-century scholar, states.¹ Living in the countryside was, according to Rabbi Meir, trying, cumbersome, and arduous, and therefore altogether not desirable. Meir, who had studied in Würzburg, Mainz, and Paris, had founded the Rothenburg Jeshiva that attracted students from all over Europe, and had spent his later years in his hometown, Worms, notably perceived urban and rural living spaces as being diametrically opposed, with urban existence as the ‘real’ way of living.

Cities, he argued, were the only environment that safeguarded the necessary requirements for ‘proper’ Jewish life, hence, urban Jewish communities were those that provided their members with institutions and facilities such as synagogues, *mikhvot*, and cemeteries, whereas in the countryside, the living conditions for the *Benei haKefarim*, the Jewish people in the villages, were troublesome at best. Living in the countryside meant living away, and, more often than not, too far away from these essential structures to make use of them on a regular basis, or even at any

¹ Michael Toch, “Economic Activities of German Jews in the Middle Ages,” *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Juden: Fragen und Einschätzungen*, ed. id. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien, 71 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 180–210; here 207. The research for this article was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) who also finances the ongoing publication project “Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich.” Two volumes that cover the time until 1365 have already been published (see notes 4 and 40), the third volume (1366–1386) is forthcoming in 2012.

time when the need arose. Living in the countryside therefore meant for medieval Jews that they had to adapt to more than living along with, and together with another religious group that, however close the contacts and however intense the cultural transfer might have been, remained different in many regards.²

Nevertheless, Jewish existence in Ashkenazic Europe was never exclusively urban. To which extent the early medieval commercial bases along the trade routes were actually settlements, is still much disputed; for the early Middle Ages, we can assume a very low number of Jews actually settling in Northwest and Central Europe.³ The Jews such as those mentioned in the *Raffelstettener Zollordnung*, an early tenth-century toll regulation for Upper and Lower Austria that included the payment obligations for *iudei et ceteri mercatores* ("Jews and other merchants"), were most definitely exactly that: Jews who were traveling through the Bavarian east, however slowly and with however many stops.⁴ There is no conclusive evidence for a connection between what is referred to as *Judendörfer* ("Jewish villages"), a quite high number of eleventh-century market towns, villages, and farmsteads in the eastern Alpine areas that include the word 'Jud' in their names, and actual Jewish settlement that only got going about two centuries later in this area; nevertheless, a linkage to staging posts and/or shelters of Jewish tradesmen has been suggested.⁵

In the northern and western areas of the Holy Roman Empire as well as in the north of France, most of the Jewish rural settlements of the high Middle Ages were set up in the hinterland of the urban centers, whereas in the southeast, particularly in the territories of today's Austria, it should take up to the mid-thirteenth century that any Jews living outside the cities were mentioned at all—which is a lot less remarkable if we consider how late Jewish settlement in these regions started compared to the areas of the huge Jewish communities, such as the Rhineland.

² Rainer Barzen, "*Benei haKefarim* – die Leute aus den Dörfern: Zur jüdischen Siedlung auf dem Lande in Aschenas und Zarfat im hohen und späteren Mittelalter," *Campana pulsante convocati. Festschrift anlässlich der Emeritierung von Prof. Dr. Alfred Haverkamp*, ed. Frank G. Hirschmann and Gerd Mentgen (Trier: Kliomedien, 2005), 21–37; here 21. Meir tried to leave the realm of the Holy Roman Empire around 1286 when King Rudolph I imposed new taxes on the Jewry, but was caught and imprisoned until his death in 1293.

³ Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich*. Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 44, sec. ed. (1998; Munich: Oldenburg, 2003), 5–6, speaks of 'no more than a few dozen Jewish families' in the ninth century, and 'a few hundred at most' in the tenth (my translation).

⁴ Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter, 1: Von den Anfängen bis 1338* (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2005), 15, n. 1 (for the internet version, see http://www.injoest.ac.at/projekte/laufend/mittelalterliche_judenurkunden/, last accessed on Jan. 16, 2012).

⁵ Markus Wenninger, "Die Siedlungsgeschichte der innerösterreichischen Juden im Mittelalter und das Problem der 'Juden'-Orte," *Bericht über den 16. österreichischen Historikertag 1984. Veröffentlichungen des Verbandes Österreichischer Geschichtsvereine*, 25 (Vienna: Eigenverlag des Verbandes Österreichischer Geschichtsvereine, 1985), 190–217; here 194–208.

Before the year 1200, the beginning of a Jewish community can be proposed for Vienna⁶; the Jew Schlom, master of the mint⁷ of Duke Leopold V (1157–1194) and mentioned around 1192/1196, is the first Jew living on Austrian territory who is known by name.⁸

In the 1220s, Rabbi Isaak bar Mosche, who counted among the most important Ashkenazic scholars, settled down in Vienna⁹; big-scale Jewish businessmen, like the Hungarian Jew Teka, extended the range of their activities into the Austrian territory; and in the first decades of the thirteenth century the Jewish communities of Wiener Neustadt and Krems, second largest to Vienna, started to prosper.¹⁰ By the late 1230s, the Jewish population in the duchy of Austria had grown to an extent that it warranted the attention of the Austrian duke. Up until then, the definition of the legal and economic position of the German Jewry had been the sole right of the Holy Roman Emperor to whose treasure they belonged, although in many other areas of the Empire the Emperor's prerogative had by then already been reduced to a mere claim in the course of the transition of imperial rights to the regional rulers.

The Austrian Duke Frederic II (1211–1246), already engaged in a power struggle with his imperial namesake in the 1230s, managed to assert his rights to the Jews living in his territories, even though it should take until 1331 that the *Judenregal*, the 'right to the Jews,' was officially given to the (then Habsburg) dukes of Austria.¹¹ Frederic's (as well as his successors') interest in 'his' Jews was primarily economic, and in his ducal privilege of 1244, the first encompassing definition of the legal standing of the Austrian Jews, he granted the Austrian Jewry a series of

⁶ In 1204, the (by then already existing) Viennese synagogue was mentioned for the first time, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 18–19, n. 5.

⁷ Jews as masters of a mint were not uncommon in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; see Toch, *Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 3), 7; Markus Wenninger, "Juden als Münzmeister, Zöllpächter und fürstliche Finanzbeamte im mittelalterlichen Aschenas," *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Juden* (see note 1), 121–38.

⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 16–18, ns. 3 and 4. Schlom and his family were killed by crusaders in 1196.

⁹ Avraham (Rami) Reiner, "From Rabbenu Tam To R. Isaac of Vienna: The Hegemony of the French Talmudic School in the Twelfth Century," *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, ed. Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 273–83; here 273–76; Martha Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur – Die mittelalterlichen Grundlagen jüdischen Lebens in Österreich," Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Christoph Lind, Albert Lichtblau, and Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 15–122; here 27 and 64.

¹⁰ Eveline Brugger, "Von der Ansiedlung bis zur Vertreibung – Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter," *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (see note 9), 123–228; here 127–29.

¹¹ On May 4, 1331, Emperor Ludwig IV confirmed a series of legal titles for the Habsburg dukes Albrecht II and Otto, among these the 'rights to the Jews'; see Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 278, n. 338.

economic privileges and a quite wide-ranging protection that suggest that he aimed at providing a further incentive for Jews to settle down in Austria.¹²

In return, Frederic and his successors profited from a prospering Jewish population. They subjected them to taxation and maintained control over Jewish business in general, which enabled them to raise considerable amounts of money whenever they needed to. In addition to that, their control over Jewish business also helped the dukes to keep in check those members of the nobility who indebted themselves to their, the dukes', Jews. The ducal privilege applied to all Jews in Austria, regardless of their place of residence. While the ducal interest lay mainly with the bigger communities, Jewish settlement in the lesser populated areas was not discouraged. By mid-thirteenth century, Jews were living in a number of smaller towns in the countryside of today's Austria, such as in Tulln (1267, mention of Jews in the regulations of the butchers' guild) and Laa an der Thaya (1277, town charter) in Lower Austria,¹³ or in the Carinthian market town of Straßburg, the residence of the bishops of Gurk.¹⁴

Apart from legal documents such as royal or ducal privileges, town charters or guild regulations, the documents that deal with daily interaction between Christians and Jews are mostly business charters, and herein lies the major source-related problem when dealing with low(er)-scale Jewish business. Transactions between members of the nobility and high-ranking financiers, that usually included high, long-term credits, were more likely to be recorded in writing, and, if added to the treasure/archive of a noble family, more likely to be preserved; thus, the transmitted source material focuses heavily on the social and economic elite of both Christian and Jewish business partners. Low, short-term loans and the transactions of small-scale pawn brokers, however, were hardly ever preserved in writing, and while literacy and access to literate people—as, e.g., in the 'institution' of town writers—became more common in the urban centers of the thirteenth century, it remained the exception in the rural areas. Due to this scant appearance of Jews dwelling in a rural setting in the source material, any conclusive

¹² Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 35–38, n. 25. For the pull factors in regard to Jewish (im)migration in general, see Hans-Jörg Gilomen, "Jüdische Migration in die Städte im Spätmittelalter — 'Ganz Israel ist füreinander verantwortlich beim Tragen der Last des Exils'," *Migration als soziale Herausforderung: Historische Formen solidarischen Handelns von der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke, Rainer Leng, and Peter Scholz. Stuttgarter Beiträge zur historischen Migrationsforschung, 8 Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 123–48; here 127–28.

¹³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 61–62, n. 46 (Tulln), 73, n. 57 (Laa), Birgit Wiedl, "Jews and the City. Parameters of Jewish Urban Life in Late Medieval Austria," *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 4 (Berlin and New York: deGruyter, 2009), 273–308; here 293 and 297.

¹⁴ Wilhelm Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten im Mittelalter. Mit einem Ausblick bis zum Jahre 1867*. Das Kärntner Landesarchiv, 9. 3rd ed. (1981; Klagenfurt: Verlag des Kärntner Landesarchivs, 2009), 227.

deductions regarding their social and economic status and their Christian clientele are problematic at best.

The earliest documents of Jewish business activities in the countryside generally show an urban involvement from one or both sides of the business partners. In 1305, the Viennese Jew Isak sold revenues at Falkenstein, that had been his private property, to Count Berthold of Maidburg.¹⁵ While Isak, “servant” of the Queen Elisabeth (*der* [. . .] *chueniginnen jude*) and related to the wealthiest and most influential families, was doubtlessly a member of the higher social and economic class, four other Jews served as witnesses out of whom at least one (also named Isak) was living in Mautern, an old but comparatively small settlement opposite Krems on the south bank of the Danube.¹⁶ This document represents the only known mention of Jewish presence in Mautern, and one of the earliest Jews who lived in the countryside known by name.

It is quite likely that any Jews who lived there were members of the Jewish community in the town of Krems that housed one of the biggest communities in the duchy of Austria. While Isak of Mautern therefore would have had easy access to the synagogue and the other facilities at Krems and would have been able to participate in the community prayers and festive ceremonies, his contemporary Leb, who lived in the village of Gars at the river Kamp, would have had to cover a distance of about 30 kilometers downstream the river through a rather hilly landscape to get to Krems.¹⁷ Unlike Isak of Mautern however, who only appears as a witness to a business transaction of a high-ranking businessman, Leb himself was (to judge by his few appearances) an accomplished moneylender: in 1312, three brothers of the noble family of Buchberg pawned their castle, several plots of land, and the village of Otten with all its revenues to Leb for the sum of 150 pound pennies, a loan that had presumably already been taken out by their father.¹⁸

The Buchberg family had been in financial troubles for several years, counting some of the most prestigious Jewish moneylenders among their creditors, and continued to incur debts with Jewish business partners in the following years. Tied

¹⁵ Eveline Brugger, *Adel und Juden in Niederösterreich. Die Beziehungen niederösterreichischer Adelsfamilien zur jüdischen Führungsschicht von den Anfängen bis zur Pulkauer Verfolgung 1338* (St. Pölten: Niederösterreichisches Institut für Landeskunde, 2004), 51–53 and 119–20; Klaus Lohrmann, *Die Wiener Juden im Mittelalter* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000), 131–32.

¹⁶ See *1100 Jahre civitas Mutarensis. Mautern in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Ausstellungskatalog, 2nd. ed. (Mautern: Verlag der Gemeinde 1999).

¹⁷ A medieval synagogue at Hadersdorf am Kamp (which would have shortened Leb’s journey by about 5 kilometers) is only reported by the very unreliable Leopold Moses, *Die Juden in Niederösterreich (mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des XVII. Jahrhunderts)*. (Vienna: Verlag Heinrich Glanz, 1935), 129; see also Pierre Genée, *Synagogen in Österreich* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1992), 28.

¹⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 182–83, n. 183.

to the document from 1312 was a Hebrew charter from after 1330¹⁹ that was issued by the Jewish brothers Rachem and Manoach, sons of Jehuda haKohen, who sold half of the castle Buchberg, that had fallen to them, to Duke Albrecht II (1298–1358). Unfortunately, no information as to how it had come to pass that Rachem and Manoach were entitled to selling the pawn or as to where they lived is provided in the text of the document, but the additional corroboration by Mosche bar Gamliel, the Viennese Rabbi,²⁰ gives evidence to the fact that they were members of the Viennese community.

An identification of Leb with Rachem and Manoach's father Jehuda, as argued for by Spitzer, is at least problematic²¹: while names meaning 'lion' were used as *kinmuim*, that is, vernacular or profane names, for Jehuda (due to the comparison of Judah to a young lion in Jacob's benediction, Genesis 49:9),²² there is not necessarily any connection between the 'holy name,' the Hebrew name that is given to the Jewish boy at his circumcision, and the name that is usually used.²³ Another appearance of Leb of Gars a few years later further speaks against this identification; and while it disproves any connection of Leb with the big Viennese community, it points at a more continuous presence of at least one Jewish family in Gars: in 1324, Leb had moved to Retz,²⁴ a small town close to Moravia that had been newly founded only a few decades earlier. In his business documents with the local lower nobility, he was called "Leb the Jew of Retz, son of Menlein of Gars", indicating that not only he but also his father—and therefore presumably the whole family—had taken up residence in Gars for at least several years. The wording of the charter allows the assumption that Menlein was not only still alive in 1324 but still living in the small Lower Austrian village.

Leb is a rather typical example (if we can deduce any 'typical' characteristics of source material that scarce) of a Jew living in the countryside who was yet

¹⁹ The Hebrew charter was tied to the charter from 1312 with a string that has been removed; the charter is now filed under the date 1330–1347 at the Austrian State Archives at Vienna (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, AUR 1330–1347); see Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 266–67, n. 317 (full Hebrew text and German translation); Brugger, *Adel und Juden* (see note 15), 65–66.

²⁰ Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 65.

²¹ Shlomo Spitzer, "Niederösterreichische hebräische Urkunden aus dem 14. Jahrhundert," *Unsere Heimat* 51 (1980), 185–91; here 187, with fn. 5.

²² Alexander Beider, *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2001), 358.

²³ Martha Keil, "'Petachja, genannt Zecherl': Namen und Beinamen von Juden im deutschen Sprachraum des Spätmittelalters," *Personennamen und Identität. Namengebung und Namensgebrauch als Anzeiger individueller Bestimmung und gruppenbezogener Zuordnung*, ed. Reinhard Härtel. *Grazer grundwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 3, Schriftenreihe der Akademie Friesach, 2 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1997), 119–146; here 120–21 and 133–35.

²⁴ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 225–26, n. 256 (1324) and 276, n. 334 (1331, with no mention of the father); Brugger, *Adel und Juden* (see note 15), 64, 125–26 and 130–31 (edition).

financially strong enough to be of interest to a noble clientele, although he was no match to his urban contemporaries, such as the Viennese Jewess Gutmanin, or Nachman of the Carinthian town of Friesach that was under the rulership of Salzburg.²⁵ Leb's later business dealings suggest at least considerable wealth; in 1324, he bought a feudal estate for 62 pound pennies, seven years later, a tithe for 95 pound pennies, both located in the immediate surroundings of his residence, which sheds not only (some) light on his financial background but also on his close ties with the rural area he lived in.²⁶

Another source-related problem that affects both urban and rural Jews lies in the type of the transmitted source material. Business charters—if the transaction was deemed important enough to warrant a written record at all—such as obligations, debenture bonds, letters given out to the guarantors, or quittances, were documents that lost their validity when either the debt had been paid back or new arrangements had been made (including the increasingly popular 'killing' of the debt in the late fourteenth century—an annulment of the debt by ducal order). This means that even with regard to the rather random tradition of written documents of the late Middle Ages, the percentage of business documents lost to us is particularly high. Sometimes, a V-shaped incision was cut into an obligation as a sign of cassation, which was kept by the (former) debtors as a proof for the payback of the debt or the redemption of the pawn; yet the majority of these documents is irrevocably lost. An exception to this are monasteries, in whose archives the expensive parchment was sometimes put to another use: many high and late medieval charters found their way into book covers, either as a 'filling' or as the inside page of the cover.²⁷

The presence of several Jews in the *Waldviertel* area, the north-west of today's Lower Austria, in the years 1316/1321 is documented in a rather unique way: at some point in time, annulled obligations were cut up and sewn together to form pouches for the seals of charters that were deemed more important. On these snippets can be found the only evidence that the Jew Abraham, who had been

²⁵ Nachman, for example, gave out a loan of (about) 800 *mark* silver, the family, originating from the Styrian town of Judenburg, owned houses in Vienna and had 'branch offices' in Salzburg and, presumably, Regensburg; see Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 209–22; Gutmanin, widow and daughter-in-law of two prestigious Viennese moneylenders, Gutman and Lebman, had borrowed 430 pound pennies to the noble family of Hagenberg (Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* [see note 4], 308, n. 392 [Nachman], 233, n. 268 [Gutmanin]; see the index there for further examples).

²⁶ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 225–26, n. 256, 276, n. 334.

²⁷ See for example the two obligations to the Viennese Jew Efferlein that were re-used as a book cover by the monastery of Zwettl, <http://www.mom-ca.uni-koeln.de/mom/AT-StiAZ/Urkunden/1323-1325/charter> and http://www.mom-ca.uni-koeln.de/mom/AT-StiAZ/Urkunden/1306_III_22/charter (last accessed on Jan. 16, 2012).

living with his father at Eggenburg around 1311, had moved to Zwettl in or before 1316. Furthermore, these seal pouches add to our knowledge about three other Jews in the area: Syboto and his son Joseph, who lived in the small town of Horn (40 kilometers north of Krems) and did business with the monastery of Zwettl,²⁸ and Hendlein of Gmünd (70 kilometers northwest of Krems at the Bohemian border), who appears as a business partner of the monastery of Zwettl and the nunnery of St. Bernhard in the vicinity of Zwettl (see Fig. 2).²⁹

In the archives of the abbey of Lilienfeld, another Jewish family can be traced that had taken up residence in the countryside in the first half of the fourteenth century. In 1317, the Jewess Hadas, her sons Sechlein and Smeril and "other relatives living in Traiskirchen," a village about 25 kilometers south of Vienna, got into a dispute with the Abbey of Lilienfeld over four vineyards which the Jews claimed had been pawned to them prior to the donation to the monastery by the former owner. By an arbitral verdict of King Frederic's representatives, the Jews were granted 16 pound pennies, plus half of the vineyards' harvest until Hadas's death.³⁰ At least her son Smeril stayed in Traiskirchen, where he can be traced doing business with the local gentry and Viennese citizens, whereas none of the other family members are mentioned again.³¹

However, transactions between Jews and villagers, let alone peasants, which presumably made up the majority of the clientele of the rural Jewry, were hardly ever even noted down. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to give a conclusive judgment as to how extensive the businesses of most of the rural Jews (as well as their low-scale urban counterparts) were. The (preserved) business documents of Jews such as Isak of Raabs,³² Lazarus and his son Abraham, called 'our Jews' by the town council of Eggenburg,³³ Abraham and Jeschem of Zwettl,³⁴ Smerlein of Krut,³⁵ and the Jewesses Sterna of Wolkersdorf³⁶ and Hendlein of Stockstall³⁷ hardly ever include references to more than 20–30 pound pennies,

²⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 213–14, n. 234. Syboto and Joseph are otherwise documented in a manuscript kept at the library of Zwettl, id., 209–10, ns. 228–29.

²⁹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 237–39, ns. 275–76, 265–66, n. 316.

³⁰ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 199–200, n. 212.

³¹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 246, n. 288 (1328), and 259, n. 306 (1329).

³² 1330, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 269, n. 322.

³³ 1311, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 179–80, n. 178.

³⁴ 1315–1317 (Abraham), 1337 (Jeschem), Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 190, n. 196,

³⁵ 1390, Rudolf Geyer and Leopold Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern zur Geschichte der Wiener Juden im Mittelalter*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschösterreich 10 (Vienna: Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1931), 112, n. 335. Krut is either Großkrut or Dürnkrut, both located in the northern Weinviertel, northwest of Vienna.

³⁶ 1331, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 279, n. 340.

³⁷ 1383 and 1387, Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 19, n. 55, 70–71,

often less, while Syboto of Horn, about whose other business transactions we know nothing, had at least been able to give out a loan that had, with interest, added up to a sum of 130 pound pennies. In 1305, a *sefer mizwot katan* ("small book of regulations") was written for a Jew Jacob of Horn.³⁸ Whether this Jacob might be identified with a Jew Jacob who appears in a business charter that was issued in Horn in 1327³⁹ is unclear, yet possible, which would suggest a continuous presence of (somewhat wealthy) Jews in the town for several decades.

None of the early business dealings of the Jew Mosche, son of Isak, who lived in the market town of Perchtoldsdorf (ca. 15 kilometers south of the center of Vienna, right at today's city border) since 1355, suggest any high financial capacity. The purchase of a farmstead, and the re-selling of it a year later never exceed the amount of 50 pounds, and his possession of a house at Perchtoldsdorf only indicate a sufficient livelihood.⁴⁰ His corroborative signature on a Hebrew charter of the Carinthian Jew Abrech of Friesach in 1357, however, points at more far-reaching business contacts,⁴¹ and a document from 1361 gives proof of Mosche's considerable capacity as a moneylender: in a settlement with the noble family of Schaunberg, the Austrian Duke Rudolph IV (1339–1365) agreed to pay off some of his debts by taking over the Schaunbergs' obligations toward Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf that had amounted to no less than 1.200 pound pennies.⁴² A note scribbled at the bottom of the document suggests that Mosche did indeed get his money from the—habitually broke—Austrian duke, indicating that Rudolph IV did not want to impair the financial capacities of someone he deemed useful.

n. 197.

³⁸ *Germania Judaica*, II: *Von 1238 bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, part 1: Aachen – Luzern, part 2: Maastricht – Zwolle, ed. Zvi Avneri (Tübingen: J. C. B Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1968); here II/1, 370.

³⁹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 240–41, n. 279.

⁴⁰ 1355, 1358, 1360 (mention of his house in Perchtoldsdorf), Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter*, 2: 1339–1365 (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2010); for the internet version, see http://www.injoest.ac.at/projekte/laufend/mittelalterliche_judenurkunden/, last accessed on Jan. 16, 2012), 172, n. 808, 200, n. 868, 241, n. 948. The entries in *Germania Judaica*, II/2 (see note 38), 648–49 and *Germania Judaica*, III: 1350–1519, part 1: *Ortschaftsartikel Aach – Lychen*, part 2: *Ortschaftsartikel Mährisch-Budwitz – Zwolle*, part 3: *Gebietsartikel, Einleitungsartikel und Indices*, ed. Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer, and Yacov Guggenheim (Tübingen: J. C. B Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1987, 1995, 2003), here III/2, 1094–95 and 1605, with fn. 189, are somewhat problematic since they place Mosche firmly in Vienna, with Perchtoldsdorf as his "secondary residence;" yet although the source material gives evidence that Mosche enjoyed strong ties to the Viennese community, he is always called "from/of Perchtoldsdorf" in the sources.

⁴¹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 186–87, n. 840.

⁴² Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 266, n. 999; see Birgit Wiedl, "Die Kriegskassen voll jüdischen Geldes? Der Beitrag der österreichischen Juden zur Kriegsfinanzierung im 14. Jahrhundert," *Krieg und Wirtschaft von der Antike bis ins 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wolfram Dornik, Walter Iber, and Johannes Giessauf (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2010), 241–60; here 244 and 250–51.

Mosche's further business contacts mainly concerned members of the Viennese citizenry but extended also to high-ranking noblemen such as the Counts of Ortenburg and Pfannberg, the Austrian lord steward, and, again, the Austrian dukes Rudolph IV and Albrecht III (1349/1350–1395).⁴³ A document from 1367 gives evidence of Mosche's high rank also in a social context: together with three Jews from Vienna, and one of Korneuburg and Ödenburg/Sopron respectively, Mosche is named "Jewish master" (*Judenmeister*) by the Austrian dukes who demanded the payment of 20.000 florin from the Jews who had stood surety for another Mosche, a high-ranking moneylender from the town of Cilli (Celje, Slovenia).

Since Mosche of Cilli (and his brother Chatschim) had fled from the ducal territory, these *judenmeister* were responsible for collecting the money, while—quite untypical for guarantors—the dukes promised them that they would not be liable for the sum with their own properties.⁴⁴ The status of these six *judenmeister* is not clear—it is quite unlikely that they were rabbis but more probable that they were *parnassim*, the heads of the respective Jewish communities, which gives possible evidence of an established Jewish community at Perchtoldsdorf around 1360. The community at Perchtoldsdorf flourished from the 1370s onward, a synagogue was established, and moneylenders such as Patusch⁴⁵ joined Mosche, who continued doing business together with his son Mankut and his grandson Nassan.

The presence of at least two Jewish families engaged in moneylending warranted the appearance of Jewish judges, Christians who were responsible for business dealings between Jews and Christians, that can be traced in the sources from 1377 onward until the 1420s when Jewish life was brought to a violent end in Austria. Like Mosche's, Patusch's family was business-wise oriented toward

⁴³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 40), 271, n. 1010 (1362, the Count of Pfannberg stands surety for a debt of the Count of Ortenburg), 275, n. 1019 (Rudolph IV settles a dispute between his servant Caspar of Altmannsdorf and Mosche), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (Austrian State Archives Vienna), AUR Uk. 1369 I 18 (Albrecht III annuls the debts of his lord steward with the Jews Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf and Judman of Vienna). Mosche makes his last appearance in 1381 when selling a vineyard to a Viennese citizen (*Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, II: *Regesten aus dem Archive der Stadt Wien*, part 1: *Verzeichnis der Originalurkunden des städtischen Archivs 1239–1411* [Vienna: Verlag des Alterthums-Vereines zu Wien bei Carl Konegen, 1898], 243, n. 1019).

⁴⁴ Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (Austrian State Archives Vienna), AUR Uk. 1367 VI 16; Christian Lackner, *Regesta Habsburgica. Regesten der Grafen von Habsburg und der Herzoge von Österreich aus dem Hause Habsburg*, 5: *Die Regesten der Herzoge von Österreich (1365–1395)*, part 1: 1365–1370 (Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 97, n. 199. Klaus Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik im mittelalterlichen Österreich* (Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 226.

⁴⁵ Patusch is mentioned as Jew of Perchtoldsdorf from 1373 to 1377, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, III: *Grundbücher der Stadt Wien*, part 1 (Vienna: Verlag des Alterthums-Vereines zu Wien bei Carl Konegen, 1898), ns. 521, 522, 694, and 909.

Vienna, namely his nephew Lesir who counted many citizens of Vienna among his clientele and quite possibly lived there at least part-time.⁴⁶ Lesir served as a *parnass* in the Viennese community in 1386 and 1398, for the second time together with his son Chadgim,⁴⁷ and one of Patusch's daughters was married to Tenichlein, a Viennese moneylender and rabbi.⁴⁸ It attests to the importance of the Perchtoldsdorf 'branch' of the family that, when doing business with the Priory of Klosterneuburg, Tenichlein was called "Jew of Vienna, son-in-law of Patusch of Perchtoldsdorf,"⁴⁹ just as Lesir was referred to as "Patusch's nephew" in most of the documents.

Residing in a rural area did therefore not necessarily equal having to eke out a living, nor did it mean a limitation of the clientele to small-town citizenry and peasants. Big-deal moneylenders such as Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf and, particularly, Hetschel of Herzogenburg⁵⁰ might have been the exception, but Jews like Nechlein, son of Maymon, who (both?) lived in Weiten, which was nothing but a hamlet about 15 kilometers north of Melk, could at least muster the financial capacity to lend a hundred pound pennies to the noble family of Reichenstein.⁵¹ Their appearance is the only evidence of Jewish presence apart from the mention of Weiten among the list of blood sites of 1338 in the Nürnberg memorial book; the alleged existence of a medieval synagogue was already interpreted as a legend in the nineteenth century.⁵² Some rural Jews would establish, or join, companies with high-profile moneylenders, such as the Jew Scheblein who lived in the Styrian market town of Schwanberg, about 50 kilometers south-west of Graz, but in 1340 appears together with his namesake Scheblein of Cilli (Celje, today's Slovenia) and Mendlein of Graz, two financiers of the high nobility.⁵³

But even if ducal and noble customers were too upscale a target group for most of the Jewish moneylenders in the countryside, they managed to built up their own circle(s) of clientele which often extended beyond the residents of the their immediate surroundings into the lower social strata of the urban centers. In the

⁴⁶ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 600 (list of entries for Lesir); Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 44) 176–77;

⁴⁷ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 55, n. 147 (1386), 293, n. 959 (1398).

⁴⁸ Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 65; Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 44) 176–77, 211 (on Tenichels business).

⁴⁹ Stiftsarchiv Klosterneuburg (Archives of the Monastery of Klosterneuburg), Uk. 1372 III 2.

⁵⁰ See the contribution of Eveline Brugger in this volume.

⁵¹ 1361, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 261, n. 987.

⁵² Genée, *Synagogen in Österreich* (see note 17), 28.

⁵³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 15–16, ns. 468–69, the identification of the Scheblein that appears from 1342–1344 with either Scheblein of Cilli or Scheblein of Schwanberg is questionable.

Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse,⁵⁴ a manuscript recording the debts of the inhabitants of the Scheffstrasse, an area outside the Viennese city walls mostly populated by craftsmen, for the years 1389–1420, non-Viennese Jews appear in high number: Josepin (Sara) of Feldsberg and David of Drauburg (Dravograd, Slovenia) granted as many loans as local Jews, and far more than the members of the most prestigious and wealthy Steuss family who were possibly ‘out of range’ for the average craftsman.

The Viennese *Grundbücher* (land registers and rent rolls) show an only slightly different picture — while more business dealings of Viennese Jews, including high-ranking financiers such as Rabbi Meir of Erfurt, David Steuss’s son-in-law, and his wife Hansüß, are recorded and make up the better part of the entries. Jews like Hirsch of Lengbach, Slomlein of Zistersdorf, and, again, the Feldsberg family of the Jewess Josepin figure prominently. A closer analysis of these sources, however, uncovers a main problem that arises when dealing with ‘countryside Jews’: for a good part of the entries, it is impossible to determine where the Jews in question actually lived. Denomination by origin is quite common for both Jews and Christians, meaning that the ‘location’ that usually follows their names — “Slomlein the Jew of Zistersdorf” — might as well have referred only to their origin instead of their actual place of residence. Even more problematic are documents that identify Jews by means of naming a prominent relative, such as “the Jew Schäftlein, Josepin of Feldsberg’s son-in-law,” since “of Feldsberg” could very well be referring to Josepin only. This, nevertheless, offers evidence supporting the importance of the Feldsberg Jewess, were it not for the fact that Josepin herself, who is only documented in Viennese sources, might have lived in Vienna at least part-time as well.⁵⁵

Jewish settlement in rural villages was with a few exceptions limited even in the late fourteenth century, the Jewish population was often likely to consist of no more than one or two families. We know very little about the daily life of these Jews, and how they coped with, and overcame the difficulties they had to face when living not only door to door, but quite often together in one house with their Christian neighbors. While it is tantamount to a commonplace by now even to mention the numerous, and manifold daily contacts between Christians and Jews living in a city, and the cultural translation that came as an inevitable result of these contacts, Jewish urban space was, even if the Jews were by no means confined to it, more clearly defined than in the rural areas. Jews in the countryside,

⁵⁴ Arthur Goldmann, *Das Judenbuch der Scheffstraße zu Wien (1389–1420), mit einer Schriftprobe. Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutsch-Österreich*, 1 (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1908); on *Judenbücher* in Austria in general, see Wiedl, “Jews and the City” (see note 13), 291–92.

⁵⁵ Keil, “Namen und Beinamen” (see note 23), 124–25.

however, often had to celebrate their feasts inside a house that was otherwise occupied by Christians, and to rely on their Christian neighbors that they would at least partly provide their daily needs and aid them in their daily work.

Apart from houses, Jewish ownership of vineyards was perhaps the most common form of Jewish landownership in the Middle Ages that integrated the owner, be they urban or rural, at least partly into the cycle of rural work.⁵⁶ Already the earliest documents on Jewish existence in Austria deal with vineyards:⁵⁷ the twelfth-century Jew Schlom, master of the ducal mint, was involved in a legal dispute with the Bavarian monastery of Vornbach over the property titles to a vineyard. Schlom stated that the vineyard had been in his possession and that the Christian who had sold it to the monastery had been his official who had only cultivated the vineyard.⁵⁸

The possession of a vineyard (the location of which is unclear) does, however, not make Schlom a country-dweller. While Schlom was living in Vienna, where around this time the first Jewish community was being established, the case is not so clear for other thirteenth-century Jews who, at least temporarily, were in the possession of vineyards. In 1239, the subdeacon Blasius confirmed the surrender of several estates to the monastery of Saint Nicola at Passau, including two vineyards at Rossatz (on the southern bank of the Danube, ca. 10 kilometers west of Krems). Before the monastery could fully take possession of the vineyards, however, they needed to redeem them for the amount of ten pound Viennese pennies from the Jew Bibas, to whom Blasius had pledged them.⁵⁹ In 1275, the Priory of Klosterneuburg sold a vineyard to Konrad of Tulln, the Austrian *landschreiber* ("county scribe"), and his wife, who had redeemed the vineyard from the Jewess Dreslinna for 100 pound pennies.⁶⁰ Both transactions are examples for vineyards that had been pledged to Jews by their former (Christian) owners who, in failing to redeem them, had to sell them to other Christians who were able to come up with the required amount of money. Vineyards were a popular pawn of Christian debtors, particularly with the manifold varieties of possibilities they offered.

⁵⁶ For the earliest notion of Jewish ownership of vineyards in the Ashkenazic region, see Toch, "Economic Activities" (see note 1), 205–06. See also Gerd Mentgen, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden im mittelalterlichen Elsaß*. Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden, Abteilung A: Abhandlungen, 2 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1995), 557–74.

⁵⁷ Martha Keil, "Velliner, Ausstich, Tribuswinkler: Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden im Mittelalter," „Und wenn schon, dann Bischof oder Abt“. *Im Gedenken an Günther Hödl (1941–2005)*, ed. Christian Domenig, Johannes Grabmayer, Reinhard Stauber, Karl Stuhlpfarrer, and Markus Wenninger (Klagenfurt: Kärntner Druckerei, 2006), 53–72; here 55–56.

⁵⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 16–17, n. 3. Schlom was murdered by crusaders in 1196; see ead., 17–18, n. 4.

⁵⁹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 33, n. 22.

⁶⁰ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 69, n. 53.

The vineyard itself could be pawned, but in doing so the owner faced the imminent danger of losing his property if it remained unredeemed, as the examples above show. To avoid this, some debtors only pledged the annual crop yield while the estate itself remained in their possession.⁶¹ In the wine-growing parts of Austria, particularly along the eastern Danube, and in the hinterland of the towns of Wiener Neustadt and Marburg (Maribor, Slovenia), vineyards were the most common pledges.⁶² If the unredeemed vineyard (or at least certain rights to it) had passed into the ownership of the Jewish creditors, they were, however, under no obligation to resell it to Christians, but quite often kept the vineyard for some time and cultivated it themselves. Vineyards were included in the property on which the tax obligations of the Jews were based on,⁶³ and the obligation of a Jewish owner toward the respective lord of the vineyard differed in no way from those of their Christian neighbors.

The son of the wealthy Jewish businessman Schwärzlein, Mordechai, had moved from the family's main seat in Vienna, where he had been involved in high-ranking business dealings with his father and brothers, to the small town of Zistersdorf, close to the Hungarian border, and had acquired a vineyard there which he seemed to have cultivated himself. In 1319, he was accused by the Abbey of Heiligenkreuz of not having handed over his annual due of one *eimer* ('bucket', ca. 58 liters) to them for several years. The arbitrators, the Austrian cellarer (who was responsible for disputes concerning vineyards) Konrad of Kyburg and the Viennese Jew Marusch, ordered Mordechai to pay an annual fee of fifteen Viennese pennies from this year on, yet there is no mention of any compensation payment for the past years. The involvement of high-profile officials (the document is corroborated with the seal of the Austrian treasurer, responsible for the Austrian Jewry) and the surprisingly lenient decision in regard to any compensation were possibly due to Mordechai's (and his family's) prominent status,⁶⁴ yet the general procedure differs in no way from similar disputes, even though not only the accused but also one of the arbitrators were Jewish. The verdict also hints at Mordechai's continuing stay at Zistersdorf; unfortunately, it is his last appearance in the sources. Whether the Jews that lived in Zistersdorf around 1400, Yzcka and the brothers Joseph and Slomlein, were related to Mordechai, is unknown.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Keil, "Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden" (see note 57), 56. This practice was generally common; see Mentgen, *Juden im mittelalterliche Elsaß* (see note 56), 566–68.

⁶² Keil, "Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden" (see note 57), 57 (on Wiener Neustadt).

⁶³ Keil, "Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden" (see note 57), 58–60.

⁶⁴ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 203–04, n. 219; Lohrmann, *Wiener Juden* (see note 15), 45.

⁶⁵ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 14–15, n. 45 (Yzcka of Zistersdorf, together with Hesklein of Raabs), 598 (entries of Joseph), 608 (entries of Slomlein).

Apart from being a valuable pawn, vineyards and their fruit were of vital ritual importance for medieval Jews. Kosher wine was required for all Jewish feasts, weddings, and circumcisions and was thus needed by both rural and urban Jews. The production procedures of kosher wine had to be carried out either by the Jewish owners themselves or other Jews who were capable of maintaining the ritual purity of the product.⁶⁶ Whereas non-Jews were often employed as helping hands for those vineyards in Jewish possession that were not intended for personal use, vineyards that were to yield kosher wine were to be maintained by Jews only. Other than that, however, Jewish viticulture followed the same rules as those that applied to their Christian contemporaries. Jewish winemakers cultivated the same types of vine as their Christian neighbors, and we must certainly not disregard the possibility of a helping hand being offered every now and then if need arose. In the areas dominated by agriculture, the organization of labor was very much governed by the calendar: harvest times, such as grape gathering, were the same for Jews and Christians, and were often organized “by the vineyard”, meaning that all those who owned a vineyard in a certain area went to gather the grapes together, even if, as already eleventh-century Rabbi Isaak bar Jehuda of Mainz confirmed in one of his resolutions, the days for harvesting would collide with the half-holidays of *sukkot*.⁶⁷

Even more pragmatic solutions were found for the problem that occurred when Jews were out harvesting their grapes and had no possibility to take their meals at the *sukkah*, the temporary, twig-covered hut constructed for the holiday, as ritually required. Fifteenth-century’s Mosche bar Jakob Mulin (Maharil), the later Rabbi of Mainz, reported of his teacher, the famous Rabbi Shalom bar Isaak of Wiener Neustadt, that he had told him of Jews who were working in the vineyards during *sukkot* and simply took their meals “in the huts the peasants had erected in their farmsteads because of the heat”; and even Shalom himself, when he was harvesting the grapes in his vineyards, sat “under the same roof made of twigs as the non-Jews who drank their wine there.” These practices did not only root in the—generally immensely practical—approach of a religious minority but also in ritual considerations, since producing ritually pure wine, which could not be done by non-Jews but had to be accomplished according to the seasonal work cycle, was considered more important than observing the rules of *sukkot*. Nevertheless, these scenes also give evidence of close everyday contacts that went far beyond the

⁶⁶ See Haym Soloveitchik, “*Halakhah*, Taboo and the Origin of Jewish Moneylending in Germany,” *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, ed. Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 295–304, on the “taboo of Gentile wine” 296; Keil, “Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden” (see note 57), 63–66 (on the precautions taken to prevent ritual contamination); Mentgen, *Juden im mittelalterlichen Elsaß* (see note 56), 559–60.

⁶⁷ Barzen, “Leute aus den Dörfern” (see note 2), 28–29.

occasional meeting on the streets but extended to sharing the breaks during what was typical rural work.⁶⁸

When Duke Rudolph IV settled a dispute between his servant Caspar of Altmannsdorf and Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf over outstanding debts, he ordered that the payment be not in money but in kind—Caspar should hand over two *fuder* (1 fuder = 1811 liters) of wine to Mosche.⁶⁹ Whether the wine was for consumption or reselling was not mentioned (and neither Rudolph's nor Caspar's concern); and although the handling of Christian wine posed a certain halachic problem, the acceptance of it as a form of debt retirement was explicitly allowed by Ashkenazic rabbis.⁷⁰ Repayment of debts or interest rates in the form of wine, or the pawning of the harvest, was so common that Duke Albrecht III, when he fixed the tax rates on must and mash for Vienna in 1374, explicitly exempted the Viennese Jews from this obligation for both their own wine (*paw wein*) and "the wine that was given to them because of debts."⁷¹ That Jews were paid in kind—already a dwindling but, particularly in the rural areas, still prevailing method of payment—also shows their integration into both the regional economy and the seasonal cycle of rural work. When in 1311 the judge and council of Eggenburg mediated between "their Jews" Lazarus and Abraham and the Priory of Zwettl who quarrelled over the claims to a farm, the compromise they reached arranged for a payment of one *mut* of corn (i.e. rye, 1 mut = ca. 1844 liters) to the Jews.⁷² In 1376 the Jewess Sara, widow of Joseph of Feldsberg, was to receive *censum et fructus*, as noted in the rent-rolls of the Scottish Abbey of Vienna—presumably a sort of revenue from either vineyards and/or houses she owned.⁷³

Jewish possession of estates and farmsteads did not necessarily imply Jewish agricultural activity.⁷⁴ The taboo on Gentile wine did not extend to the production of other aliments; a sufficient supply with staple food did therefore not necessitate the development of an extended Jewish agricultural engagement.⁷⁵ While urban Jews engaged in a great variety of economic activities, such as craftsmen who worked for both the Jewish community members and for a non-Jewish clientele,

⁶⁸ Keil, "Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden" (see note 57), 61–63.

⁶⁹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 40), 275, n. 1019.

⁷⁰ Keil, "Zum Weingenuss österreichischer Juden" (see note 57), 54; Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Taboo and the Origin of Jewish Moneylending" (see note 66), 296.

⁷¹ Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (Municipal Archives of Vienna), Hauptarchiv Urkunde n. 842; Christian Lackner, *Regesta Habsburgica. Regesten der Grafen von Habsburg und der Herzoge von Österreich aus dem Hause Habsburg*, 5: *Die Regesten der Herzoge von Österreich (1365–1395)*, part 2: 1371–1375 (Vienna and Munich: Böhlau and Oldenbourg, 2010), 199–200, n. 1154 (with a list of full-text editions).

⁷² Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 1 (see note 4), 179–80, n. 178.

⁷³ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 551, n. 1837.

⁷⁴ Toch, "Economic Activities" (see note 1), 206–07, with an analysis of the few known exceptions.

⁷⁵ Toch, *Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 3), 6.

Jewish agricultural activities are scarcely documented for the Middle Ages⁷⁶; and while part-time farming of Jews living in the countryside is highly likely, it is barely traceable in the sources. Jews who came into possession of rural estates, such as the brothers Lubin and Nekelo, tax farmers of the Austrian duke (and later Bohemian king) Přemysl Otakar II (1232–1278), often did so in the course of a (in this case somewhat unclear) business transaction. The two brothers managed to defend their title to the sixteen feudal estates against the bishop of Freising, yet the (continuous?) possession of these estates meant additional income, not rural activity, for the two high-ranking Jews who enjoyed not only close ties to the Austrian ducal but also the Hungarian royal court.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Jewish possession of (even feudal) rural estates, annual dues and rents, and even tithes, is documented (albeit scarcely) throughout the Middle Ages, both acquired as unredeemed pledges and bought property. As far as the legal procedures are concerned, Jews bought, sold, and re-sold these possessions just as ‘normally’ as Christians did, sometimes even in company with them.⁷⁸

Jews who lived in the closely knit neighborhoods of rural areas or small towns or villages were often participating in the duties of these communities. By royal/ducal consent, the Jews of the small Lower Austrian town of Laa an der Thaya (ca. 65 kilometers north of Vienna, at the border to today’s Czech Republic) were required from 1277 onward to share the tax load with the Christian inhabitants,⁷⁹ their taxes being included into the town’s taxes instead of—as usual—being a part of the collective Jewish tax the levying of which was the responsibility of the respective Jewish communities.⁸⁰

However close and peaceful the neighborly contacts might have been, the relations between Jews and Christians in a small community remained volatile at best. Unlike the pogroms of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries in the

⁷⁶ See in general the collection of articles by Michael Toch, *Peasants and Jews in Medieval Germany: Studies in Cultural, Social and Economic History*. Variorum collected studies series, 757 (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003); for an overview over the literature, see Toch, “Economic Activities” (see note 1), 179–80, fn. *; and 207–08, with a list of occupations 208.

⁷⁷ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 50–51, n. 38.

⁷⁸ When reselling half of a farmstead in 1358, Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf confirmed in his sales document that the farmstead was his ‘bought possession’ (*Kaufgut*) and that he had a ‘regular bill of sale’ for it; a common phrase to corroborate the legality of the transaction (Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* [see note 40], 200, n. 868). In the same year, Nikolaus Goldener, a citizen of Marburg/Maribor and the Jew Chatschim sold a rent of four pounds and a duty of chicken and eggs to the hospital of Marburg (id., 199, n. 867).

⁷⁹ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 74, n. 57. The privilege to Laa was issued by King Rudolph I, who was de facto ruling the duchy of Austria in 1277, with a reference to two older, ducal privileges.

⁸⁰ Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 44) 113–14 (on Laa) and 281–98 (general development); Keil, “Gemeinde und Kultur” (see note 9), 44–47; Brugger, “Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter” (see note 10), 147–148; Wiedl, “Jews and the City” (see note 13), 293.

western parts of the Holy Roman Empire that took their origins in the cities and subsequently wreaked havoc on both urban and rural Jewish settlement,⁸¹ the persecutions of Jews in the south-east sprung up in exactly these close-knit communities of the rural area: the small towns of Laa an der Thaya, Korneuburg, and Pulkau were the first places of persecution around 1300. In this time, new accusations against Jews had emerged, such as the blood libel that for the first time since antiquity had appeared in mid-twelfth-century England, and the host desecration accusation that quickly spread from Paris from 1290 onwards throughout the Holy Roman Empire.⁸²

With the transubstantiation doctrine having been declared a Church dogma at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, these accusations against Jews of desecrating hosts by stealing them (or having them stolen) and subsequently maltreating them were reinforced in the public mind and became in the regions of today's Austria the most common trigger for anti-Jewish outbreaks. Already four years after the emergence of the Paris legend, the first of these persecutions hit the Jewish inhabitants of a small town in the Lower Austrian countryside: In 1294, the Jews of Laa an der Thaya were accused of having hidden a stolen host in a stable, and, since the mere possession of a host wafer warranted their guilt, they were killed immediately.⁸³

⁸¹ For the vast literature on this topic, see the overviews *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp. Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte, Vorträge und Forschungen, 47 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999); and Jörg R. Müller, "Erez geserah – 'Land of Persecution': Pogroms against the Jews in the *regnum Teutonicum* from c. 1280 to 1350," *Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages* (see note 9), 245–60.

⁸² The earliest murder of Jews in today's Austrian territory was the killing of Schlom and his family that took place in Vienna in 1196; see above. For an overview over the persecutions on the grounds of alleged host wafer desecrations, see Friedrich Lotter, "Hostienfrevelvorwurf und Blutwunderfälschung bei den Judenverfolgungen von 1298 ("Rintfleisch") und 1336–1338 ("Armleder")," *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16. – 19. September 1986*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica Schriften, 33/5: *Fingierte Briefe, Frömmigkeit und Fälschung, Realienfälschungen* (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1988), 533–83; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales. The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1999; sec. ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, the quotes herein refer to the first edition). For the ritual murder accusation, see *Die Legende vom Ritualmord. Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen Juden*, ed. Rainer Erb. Dokumente, Texte, Materialien. Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin, 6 (Berlin: Metropol, 1993); Jeremy Cohen, *Christ Killers: the Jews and the Passion from the Bible to the Big Screen* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and Richard Utz, "Remembering Ritual Murder: The Anti-Semitic Blood Accusation Narrative in Medieval and Contemporary Cultural Memory," *Genre and Ritual: The Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals*, ed. Eyolf Østrem, Mette Birekdal Bruun, et. al. *TRANSfiguration* 1–2, 2003 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2005), 145–62, all with further literature.

⁸³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 1 (see note 4), 89–90, n. 82.

It is a somewhat sad fact that quite a lot of the knowledge about rural Jewish settlement stems from notes on Jewish persecution, such as the report of the *Anonymus Leobensis* of a persecution of Jews in Styria and Carinthia in 1312 that was caused by the alleged retrieval of a desecrated host at a Jew's house *prope Fuerstenvelde*, in the proximity of the Styrian town of Fürstenfeld (for which no Jewish inhabitants are documented for that time⁸⁴), suggesting a rural setting.⁸⁵ Many of the Jewish settlements in today's Germany, Austria and Bohemia are mentioned just once, in what is known as the *Nürnberg Memorbuch*, the Nürnberg memorial book,⁸⁶ a medieval collection of mostly names and locations. The memorial book starts its lists with the locations of (then former) Jewish presence (*Blutstätten*, "blood sites") that had fallen prey to the crusaders in 1096, and continues with lists of former Jewish settlements that had been affected by the persecution waves due to alleged host desecrations and blood libels, such as those identified with the names Armleder, Rintfleisch, and the town of Deggendorf, and the devastating pogroms that followed, and often preceded, outbreaks of the Black Plague in mid-fourteenth century.⁸⁷

The geographical pattern of these settlements—if identifiable—suggests a considerably more widespread Jewish presence in the countryside than documented by other sources, particularly in regard to the settlement of Jews outside of urban centers. These persecutions and their consequences would change Jewish settlement patterns in many areas of the Holy Roman Empire, for in their course not only the lives of many, most of, or even all the Jews living in a town or village had been wiped out, but also the existing community structures, however small and 'improvised' they might have been, had been destroyed. Chapels, monasteries or churches were erected at the sites of former synagogues,⁸⁸ and in small-scale settlements the size of which had not warranted the establishing of a Jewish community, houses that had been owned and/or inhabited by Jews were turned into sites of Christian worship, such as it was the case in the small Lower

⁸⁴ In 1342, a Jew Muschlein of Fürstenfeld is documented, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 31, n. 500.

⁸⁵ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 185–86, n. 188.

⁸⁶ Siegmund Salfeld, *Das Martyrologium des Nürnberger Memorbuches*. Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, 3 (Berlin: Leonhard Simion, 1898). The term "Memorbuch" originates from the mid-seventeenth century; see Aubrey Pomerance, "'Bekannt in den Toren': Name und Nachruf in Memorbüchern," *Erinnerung als Gegenwart. Jüdische Gedenkkulturen*, ed. Sabine Hödl and Eleonore Lappin (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000), 33–54; here 24. For the list of the blood sites related to Pulkau, see Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 348–49, n. 455; further Barzen, "Leute aus den Dörfern" (see note 2), 25–26.

⁸⁷ Müller, "Land of Persecution" (see note 81); Lotter, "Hostienfrevelvorwurf" (see note 82); Rubin, *Gentile Tales* (see note 82), 48–57.

⁸⁸ Rubin, *Gentile Tales* (see note 82), 89–92.

Austrian town of Korneuburg.⁸⁹ Thus, it was made sure that the Jews (and their alleged crimes) stayed in the collective memory of the Christian community when their real presence was a thing of the past.

The events that befell the Jews of the small Austrian town of Korneuburg in 1305 are a model example of how volatile and precarious the (up until then) peaceful neighborhood between Jews and Christians in a village community was.⁹⁰ When a bloodied host wafer was found on the threshold of the Jew Zerkel's house, the enraged mob killed the house-owner, Zerkel, and ten more Jews, presumably the entire Jewish population of Korneuburg. The course of events and its consequences are quite revealing in regard to the living conditions of what was presumably a somewhat extended Jewish family and their servants in a small town in the vicinity of Vienna. The house at which's doorstep the host was found is throughout the sources called "the Jew's house", or "Zerkel's house", clearly defining it as the Jew's property.

Also, several testimonies given at the huge investigation that was launched by the bishop of Passau, indicate that the Christian population of Korneuburg—the Jews' immediate neighbors—had not shied away from entering the "Jewish" house, nor was there any caution or reluctance on the Christian side of allowing the Jews to enter their houses, and the way they addressed each other speaks of more than just occasional contact. These close relations notwithstanding, the Jews knew immediately that they were in mortal danger when they found the bloodstained host on their doorstep, and they were justified in fearing that the mere accusation of a "typically Jewish" crime was enough for the Korneuburg citizens to turn against their neighbors and murder them within what could not have been more than a few hours.

While the Korneuburg persecution remained a local incident, the accusation of a host desecration raised against the Jews of Pulkau, a town about 80 kilometers north-west of Vienna, in 1338 brought about the first wave of persecution in Austria that went beyond the local scope.⁹¹ Prior to that, Jewish presence at Pulkau

⁸⁹ Birgit Wiedl, "The Host on the Doorstep. Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders in an Alleged Host Desecration in Fourteenth-Century Austria," *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Connie Scarborough. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 11 (Berlin and New York: DeGruyter, forthcoming, 2012), Rubin, *Gentile Tales* (see note 82), 57–65. and 89–91 on the erection of sites of Christin worship over former Jewish places; for a general discussion of 'cultural memory' and its ways of remembering Jews, see Utz, "Remembering Ritual Murder" (see note 82), and Cohen, *Christ Killers* (see note 82), with further literature.

⁹⁰ Wiedl, "Host on the Doorstep" (see note 89).

⁹¹ The Nürnberg memorial book names altogether 20 Lower Austrian towns, market towns, and villages as places of persecution (Pulkau, Eggenburg, Retz, Znaim, Horn, Zwettl, Raabs, Falkenstein, Hadersdorf am Kamp, Gars am Kamp, Rastendorf, Mistelbach, Weiten, Emmersdorf, Tulln, Klosterneuburg, Passau, St. Pölten, Laa an der Thaya, and Drosendorf), with the (somewhat questionable) addition of the Carinthian town of Villach, the Moravian towns of Budweis,

is only documented once, and it is highly likely that the Jew Merchlein, who is recorded as having bought a field in 1329,⁹² is the same *Marquardus iudeus* in front of whose house the desecrated host had allegedly been found. Although the Austrian dukes Albrecht II and Otto (1301–1339) were able to protect the huge community in Vienna (who, at the insistence of the Viennese citizenry, had to lower the interest rates in return)⁹³—and there is no mention of persecutions in the bigger communities of Krems and Wiener Neustadt—the incidents at Laa and Korneuburg, and the pogroms following Pulkau revealed the limits of the ducal protection that could not be brought to effect quickly enough in the rural areas to warrant a survival of the local Jewry.

After the Pulkau persecutions of 1338, Jewish (re-)settlement focussed for a long time rather on the urban centers with their already established Jewish communities that could, at least in the perception of the surviving Jews, provide more efficient protection than a rural surrounding.⁹⁴ The urban centers of Jewish life in Austria experienced an increase in their importance in the second half of the fourteenth century, which was mainly due to the strong ducal protection that kept them safe from Plague-related pogroms that wreaked havoc on many Jewish communities of the Holy Roman Empire in the mid-fourteenth century.⁹⁵ Jewish

Erdberg, Jamnitz, Fratting, Libisch, Trebitsch, Feldsberg, Tschaslau, Prichowitz, and the Bohemian town of Neuhaus; see Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 348–49, n. 455, and 333–35, n. 434–36; See further Manfred Anselgruber and Herbert Puschnik, *Dies trug sich zu anno 1338. Pulkau zur Zeit der Glaubenswirren* (Pulkau: Verlag der Stadtgemeinde, [1992]), and Birgit Wiedl, “Die angebliche Hostienschändung in Pulkau 1338 und ihre Rezeption in der christlichen und jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung,” *medaon. Magazin für jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung* 6 (2010), internet journal; see http://medaon.de/pdf/A_Wiedl-6-2010.pdf (last accessed on Jan. 16, 2012). Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 65–68 (see note 82), who gives (without a source reference) the number of ‘150 Jews of Pulkau’ who were killed during the persecutions, which is by far too high a number for that small Lower Austrian town. Her assessment that it was Duke Otto’s ‘abandonment’ of the Austrian duchy in favour of the ‘recently annexed’ Styria (which was neither ‘annexed’ nor recently acquired by the Habsburgs nor governed by Otto alone) that made the Pulkau persecutions possible is the result of a misunderstanding: she ignores the existence of Otto’s brother, Duke Albrecht II (whom she mistakes for Albrecht II of Saxony, the bishop of Passau), who had learned his lesson and managed to protect the Austrian Jews in 1349/1350.

⁹² Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 257–58, n. 303.

⁹³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 338, n. 440.

⁹⁴ Rosemarie Kosche, “Erste Siedlungsbelege nach 1350,” *Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter von der Nordsee bis zu den Südalpen*, 1: *Kommentarband*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2002), 243–47; Barzen, “Leute aus den Dörfern” (see note 2), 27; Wenninger, “Siedlungsgeschichte der innerösterreichischen Juden” (see note 5), 191–92.

⁹⁵ The Jewish community of Krems was the only one that was affected by a Plague-related pogrom in the duchy of Austria; the effective protection duke Albrecht II managed to wield over his Jews earned him some scathing remarks from the ecclesiastical chroniclers; see Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 94–101, ns. 645–50; see also Kosche, “Siedlungsbelege” (see note 94), 245 (on Austria and Bohemia).

life in the countryside, however, particularly in the north of the duchy of Austria, had suffered a substantial blow, and if at all, it took decades before Jews returned to the former rural places of settlement after the devastating persecutions of 1338.⁹⁶

With the exception of the town of Klosterneuburg, where Jewish inhabitants stayed beyond 1338,⁹⁷ we know neither of a continuous presence of Jews in any of the market towns nor of a re-settlement of families that had lived in the afflicted areas before. The latter is, however, also a source-related problem; for all we know, the Jew Isak, who lived in Laa an der Thaya in 1357/1358,⁹⁸ might as well have been a former inhabitant of the small town, or was related to former inhabitants the names of which are unknown. In the 1380s, at least two Jews lived, or had lived, in the 1338 blood site of Feldsberg (Valtice, Czech Republic); the Jews Frenklein⁹⁹ and Joseph, whose widow Sara (Josepin) and her heirs rose to be among the main moneylenders to the inhabitants of the *Scheffstrasse* in the years 1389 to 1420 (suggesting that she, or at least part of her family, had moved there).¹⁰⁰ Yet as for Laa, there is no evidence as to whether any of the Feldsberg Jews of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were in any way related to the Jews that had once lived there; the same is true for the Jew Herschlein of Hadersdorf am Kamp.¹⁰¹ In Raabs and Eggenburg, Jews resettled in the late

⁹⁶ For the following (market) towns, Jewish presence can be traced in the second half of the fourteenth century: Bruck an der Leitha, Eggenburg, Hainburg, Herzogenburg, Korneuburg, Laa an der Thaya, Langenlois, Marchegg, Neulengbach, Tulln, Weikersdorf, Weiten, Weitra, Ybbs, and Zisterdorf. Quite uncertain (since the names most likely referred to the origin, not the place of residence, of the Jews) are Hadersdorf am Kamp, Himberg, Krut (which is either Groß- oder Dürnkut), Mistelbach, Reichenbach, Stockstall, Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Waltersdorf, Wullersdorf, and Zell; see *Germania Judaica* III/3 (see note 40), 1979

⁹⁷ See the appearance of the Jewess Plume and her son-in-law in 1339 (Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 [see note 40], 9, n. 457). The document, that deals with a surety concerning a debt with Plume, is however one of the few business documents that refer to the Pulkau persecution: if the payback of the debt would be moot 'due to the events concerning the Jews,' the guarantors too should be free of any obligations. Plume is mentioned again in 1343, which means that Jewish life was not completely extinct in Klosterneuburg (id., 34, n. 508).

⁹⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 40), 196, n. 859, 204, n. 877.

⁹⁹ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 15–16, n. 46 (1383).

¹⁰⁰ Sara appears first in 1385 as "Czaerln, widow of Joseph," Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 47, n. 120, and continues to do so under this name until 1395, partly together with another widow, Pheblein. In 1396, Joseph appears alone (263, n. 862), and three years later together with his grandmother, here called Josepinn (307, n. 1005). In the *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse*, she shows up (as Josepin) very frequently. From 1389 to 1405, business is conducted too by her sons-in-law Süßman, Schäftlein, and Mendlein, and up until 1417, by Schäftlein's son Smerlein and his cousin David (see the lists of entries in Goldmann, *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse* [see note 54], 134, [David, 1404], 135 [Josepin and Mendlein, 1390–1399 and 1391–1393 respectively], 136 [Schäftlein, 1389–1405], and 137 [Süßman and Smerlein, 1398–1403 and 1415–1417 respectively], and Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* [see note 35], 606 [Schäftlein], 610 [Süßman]), although it is not quite clear whether all of them lived at Feldsberg.

¹⁰¹ The Jew Swerzl, son of Herschlein of Hadersdorf, is documented as a house owner in Krems

fourteenth century,¹⁰² while in other areas, such as Pulkau itself as well as the small towns of Retz, Zwettl, and Horn, and the village of Gars am Kamp, where Jewish presence is documented for the time before 1338, no signs of (re-)settlement has been traced (yet). For other market towns, namely Rastenfeld, Mistelbach, Drosendorf, and Emmersdorf, the notes on the extinction of Jewish life in 1338 remained the only reminder of its entire existence.

Yet even for many regions that are not counted among the blood sites of the 1338 persecution, a time gap where no Jewish existence is traceable can be noted. Jews might still have been present in the 1350s in the village of Traiskirchen,¹⁰³ where the family of the Jewess Hadas had been living in the early fourteenth century, since for the year 1351 (and again in 1363), a (Christian) Jewish judge is documented.¹⁰⁴ It should take until 1382 that Jews reappear in the sources, when the Jewess Twora, Merchlein of Traiskirchen's sister-in law, gave out loans to Viennese citizens.¹⁰⁵ The connection to Vienna remained close over the next decades: while his father Efferlein resided in Traiskirchen, there is no evidence that the Jew Seklein, a quite busy moneylender for the Viennese citizenry, ever lived in Traiskirchen himself.¹⁰⁶ Other "Jews of Traiskirchen", such as Chadgim¹⁰⁷ and Hendlein,¹⁰⁸ are likewise best documented through their business contacts to citizens of Vienna, which might indicate at a secondary, or even principal, residence in Vienna; while Chadgim's father Musch shared Efferlein's fate of only being documented through his son's businesses. Chadgim's son Rachim continued his father's business, and counted the Scottish Abbey at Vienna among his clientele that owed him and the Jew Jacob of Weitra (140 kilometers north-west of Vienna at the Bohemian border) the considerable sum of 370 pound pennies.¹⁰⁹

Whereas the orientation toward Vienna might also be a source-related 'distortion' due to the higher number of documents, particularly rent rolls and

around 1400, *Germania Judaica* II/1 (see note 38), 313; allegedly, a synagogue existed in the fifteenth century, but no traces have been found yet; see Genée, *Synagogen in Österreich* (see note 17), 28.

¹⁰² Hesklein of Raabs and his son Pfefferlein are documented for 1383 and 1402; see Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 14–15, n. 45 (Yzcka of Zistersdorf, Hesklein of Raabs), 342–43, n. 1133 (Hesklein [Heschken], Pfefferlein, and Joseph), and Goldmann, *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse* (see note 54), 59, n. 223; David of Eggenburg was a quite important moneylender and ducal tax collector in the 1370s; see Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 44) 286. *Germania Judaica* III/2 (see note 40), 1461–62.

¹⁰³ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 114, n. 682, 289, n. 1049.

¹⁰⁵ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 5, n. 17, 8, n. 28 (both 1382).

¹⁰⁶ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 604 (list of his entries, 1388–1399).

¹⁰⁷ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 594 (list of his entries, 1384–1396); Goldmann, *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse* (see note 54), 51, n. 198 (1389)

¹⁰⁸ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 430, n. 1432 (1408)

¹⁰⁹ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 475–76, n. 1589 (1412).

land registers, that have been transmitted for Vienna, an existence of several low- to mid-scale dynasties of Jewish moneylenders, who either originated from or resided in market towns in the Lower Austrian countryside—Josepin of Feldsberg, the Traiskirchen family, Hirsch of Lengbach—and maintained close ties to the Viennese community, can be clearly noted for the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. While some, or even many, of these seemingly rural Jews, particularly those from the northern areas, might in fact have only originated from these market towns, there is additional evidence of prospering Jewish life in the southern regions.

An indication of Jewish presence is the appearance of the *Judenrichter* (*iudex iudeorum*, “Jewish judge”), an office that had been introduced in the 1244 privilege and that remained quite unique to the eastern parts of today’s Austria and Slovenia. The Jewish judge—not to be mistaken with the judge(s) of the *Bet Din*, the rabbinical court—was a Christian, usually a member of the urban (or market town’s) elite, and responsible for settling disputes between Jews and Christians; in addition to that, he often corroborated Jewish business documents with his seal, and, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, was involved in the more comprehensive jurisdictional and economic control of the towns over their Jew.¹¹⁰ Since the Jewish judge kept his title even when no Jews were involved in the business transaction that was documented in the respective charter, the appearance of a Jewish judge is sometimes among the earliest indications of Jewish presence, such as it was the case with the Jewish judges of Mödling and Herzogenburg, who sealed charters in 1364 and 1369 respectively.¹¹¹ The rise in importance of Jewish communities such as Traiskirchen, Mödling, and Perchtoldsdorf also bear testimony to a new pattern of settlement after 1338 that had shifted geographically from the northwest (where Pulkau is located) to the south, while only a few places of long-term Jewish settlement continued to existed in the north. At the same time, Vienna (as well as the other big cities) remained a main focus of Jewish migration, attracting not only Jews from the nearby countryside and the adjacent countries but from as far away as northern Italy and the Rhineland.¹¹²

The constitutive facilities of a Jewish community, namely synagogues, Jewish baths (including the ritual baths, *mikhvot*), and cemeteries,¹¹³ are difficult to trace

¹¹⁰ Wiedl, “Jews and the City” (see note 13), eadem, “Juden in österreichischen Stadtrechten des Mittelalters” *Österreichisches Archiv für Recht und Religion* 57.2 (2010), 257–72; here 259–60.

¹¹¹ For Herzogenburg, see the contribution of Eveline Brugger in this volume, for Mödling; see below.

¹¹² *Germania Judaica* III/3 (see note 40), 1979.

¹¹³ Additional facilities were dance and/or assembly halls, slaughtering houses, bakeries, and hospitals, that were usually only found in big and prosperous communities; see for Austria Keil, “Gemeinde und Kultur” (see note 9), 40–41, and generally *Germania Judaica* III/3 (see note 40), 2081–89.

(not only) in the countryside, since after an expulsion and/or murdering of the Jewish population, the buildings that had housed these institutions were either torn down or put to another use. The most evidence can be gathered for synagogues, both in archaeological excavations and documents, albeit most of the latter date from centuries when early modern denominations for the house/plot of land, that had long ceased to serve its ritual purpose, hint at its former function, sometimes erroneously so. Outside the urban centers, medieval synagogues are documented for the Lower Austrian towns of Bruck an der Leitha, Neulengbach, Mödling, Eggenburg, Perchtoldsdorf, Neunkirchen, and the Styrian town of Hartberg, whereas for Hadersdorf am Kamp and Weiten, the evidence is questionable (see above).¹¹⁴ Despite these difficulties, synagogues can be of immeasurable value when it comes to assessing the existence, size, and prosperity of a Jewish community.

The beginnings of the Jewish community at Mödling are only scarcely documented in written sources. Jewish presence before 1350 is possible; a son of Mosche of Perchtoldsdorf, Isak, might have resided there, and Viennese Jews such as Zacharias held property—most likely vineyards—in Mödling.¹¹⁵ In the second half of the fourteenth century, the first hint at Jewish inhabitants is the existence of a Jewish judge who is documented for the years 1364 and 1365, when Michael Kolb, Jewish judge of Mödling, corroborated two bills of sale with his seal.¹¹⁶ Although no Jews were involved in these transactions, members from the big Jewish communities of Vienna and Wiener Neustadt were perhaps already living in Mödling around that time—in 1370, Leubmann, the son of Vreudman of Wiener Neustadt, had taken up residence in Mödling,¹¹⁷ and with Joseph, a member of the Steuss family, a Jew with very strong ties to the most prestigious Viennese financiers, had moved to Mödling in 1377 at the latest.¹¹⁸

Written evidence of their business activities remains comparatively limited though; and for most of the Jewish inhabitants of Mödling, a secondary (or even principal) residence in Vienna can be assumed.¹¹⁹ Yet what gives ample evidence of the importance (and, presumably, the wealth) of the Jewish community at

¹¹⁴ See Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 17–24, for a description of the medieval synagogues of Austria (including Marburg/Maribor and Ödenburg/Sopron in today's Slovenia and Hungary respectively).

¹¹⁵ Wiedl, "Kriegskassen" (see note 42), 245–47. See also *Germania Judaica* II/2 (see note 38), 544–45, where however Melk is mistaken for Mödling (concerning the Jewess Radel).

¹¹⁶ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 40), 319–20, n. 1110, 326–27, n. 1124.

¹¹⁷ Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, AUR 1370 XI 14.

¹¹⁸ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien, III: Grundbücher der Stadt Wien, part 3: Satzbuch A1 (1373–1388)* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, 1921), 86, n. 3394 (1377, *consobrinio Steussonis de Wienna*); Goldmann, *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse* (see note 54), 28–29, n. 111 (1394).

¹¹⁹ *Germania Judaica* III/2 (see note 40), 878–89.

Mödling is the synagogue that, according to drawings and (later) reconstruction plans, must have been quite extensive; in addition to the synagogue, one, or perhaps even two Jewish baths existed.¹²⁰ The most stunning part however is the entrance door to the synagogue, dated between 1350 and (before) 1420 and made from iron plates that were riveted together. The door is elaborately decorated with motifs that can also be found in Hebrew manuscripts.¹²¹

While a *mikhva* could (more) easily be improvised by making use of a river, or a pond,¹²² communal facilities such as a kosher butcher (*Schächter*) and/or tailor, or a cemetery were difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. It is quite likely that Jews living in the countryside knew how to provide themselves with kosher meat by butchering the animals themselves. Several regulations that forbade the Jews to sell those parts of the slaughtered animals they considered unfit for their consumption to Christian customers hint at the quite common practice of Jewish in-house slaughtering¹²³; likewise, the use of the municipal slaughtering house is documented.¹²⁴ Even if the majority of these regulations were drawn up by representatives of cities, they also applied to Jews coming in from the countryside on the market days to sell their products there.

The cemetery that was bound to several halachic and ritual regulations, posed a real problem for many Jews in the countryside, since establishing and maintaining it not only required a certain amount of personnel that was only to be had at a bigger community, but also included the granting of a plot of land by the respective ruler.¹²⁵ According to Jewish tradition, these cemeteries were purchased 'for eternity,' which also meant that only the bigger communities, those who hoped for a more continuous existence, established cemeteries at all; in the territory of modern-day Austria, medieval Jewish cemeteries are documented only for Vienna, Krems, and Wiener Neustadt (the three main communities) as well as Salzburg, Villach, Friesach, Graz, Judenburg, Marburg/Maribor, and Pettau/Ptuj (both in Slovenia).¹²⁶ Therefore, it was more the rule than the exception for rural Jews to have no, or at least limited access to a Jewish cemetery in their vicinity. Rural Jews coped in several ways: Private burial sites were established in towns

¹²⁰ Roland Burger et. al., *Ausgelöscht. Vom Leben der Juden in Mödling* (Mödling and Vienna: edition umbruch, 1988), 10–23.

¹²¹ Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 20–21, with illustration.

¹²² Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 41.

¹²³ Wiedl, "Jews and the City" (see note 13), 296–99; ead., "Juden in österreichischen Stadtrechten" (see note 110), 264–67.

¹²⁴ Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 40.

¹²⁵ Martha Keil, "Orte der jüdischen Öffentlichkeit: Judenviertel, Synagoge, Friedhof," *Ein Thema – zwei Perspektiven. Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, ed. Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2007), 170–86; here 179–81.

¹²⁶ Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur" (see note 9), 24.

that housed only a few Jewish inhabitant, as it is documented for the (today) Tyrolian town of Lienz.¹²⁷

Although the Christian surroundings for the Jews living in Lienz were urban, there was never enough Jewish presence to initiate the establishing of a Jewish community.¹²⁸ In 1325, a *Judenhaus* (Jewish house) is mentioned that was situated inside the inner town wall, and a hundred years later, when Jewish existence came to an end in Lienz in the wake of a blood libel persecution in 1442/1443, it was noted that “a number of Jews” (*etliche Juden*) had taken up their residence in two houses, raising the population to no more than a few families.¹²⁹ However extensive the Jewish population at Lienz might have been, the nearest cemetery was too far away: about 110 kilometers, in the Carinthian town of Villach that was under the rule of the Bishop of Bamberg.

Villach had all the features a community needed, in fact it housed one of the most important Jewish communities in the southern regions, with its cemetery dating back to the twelfth century, and a synagogue that was first mentioned in 1342¹³⁰; yet even if the Jews of Lienz had been willing to carry their deceased to that cemetery, they would have faced an impossible task due to the surrounding mountains, at least in winter. Another solution was found that is traceable through a document from 1498, long after the extinction of any Jewish presence: a field on the southern bank of the river Drau (which means on the opposite bank) was sold, called *der Judenfreythoff*, “the Jewish cemetery,” indicating that, at some time, the Jews of Lienz had established their own burial grounds despite the absence of a ‘full’ Jewish community.¹³¹

For most of the rural Jews, however, granting their deceased a proper burial meant having them transferred to the closest cemetery of an urban community, which often included the covering of considerable distances. In the early fourteenth century, the town council of the (then) Styrian town of Wiener

¹²⁷ Markus Wenninger, “Juden im Herrschaftsbereich der Grafen von Görz und Görz-Tirol,” *Symposium zur Geschichte von Millstatt und Kärnten*, ed. Franz Nikolasch (Millstatt: n.p., 2000); Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 229–33.

¹²⁸ Around 1300, the Jew Isak of Lienz was an influential moneylender and tenant of tolls and mints whose business contacts reached as far as the Adriatic Sea (Wenninger, “Juden als Münzmeister” [see note 7], 125, Brugger, “Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter” [see note 10], 191). Despite the presence of such a high-ranking businessman, the overall extent of Jewish existence in Lienz should not be over-estimated (Wenninger, “Juden in Görz” [see note 127], 120, in contrast to Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* [see note 14], 233, who deduces the existence of a synagogue from the mention of the burial site).

¹²⁹ Wenninger, “Juden in Görz” (see note 127), 120 and 130–33.

¹³⁰ Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 164–65, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 30–31, n. 499.

¹³¹ Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 233, Wenninger, “Juden in Görz” (see note 129), 120 with fn. 79.

Neustadt, situated at the passage from Austria to Styria, issued a series of toll regulations in the course of which three citizens were required to declare the customs of the last 30 years, according to which the new regulations were settled. Among these, the question of how to deal with Jews who were transferring their deceased was regulated: if such a party were to pass the toll station, no official tax was required, but the Jews should come to an arrangement with the toll officer themselves. Jews from the duchies of Austria or Styria—those who were most likely to pass the toll station—were exempt from any toll payment, which gives evidence for a rather frequent ‘use’ of this method of transferring the deceased.¹³²

Despite the fact that Jewish life in the countryside could prosper, a tendency to migrate toward the urban centers even among quite successful rural businessmen is evident.¹³³ The family of the most important moneylender to the Habsburg dukes in the second half of the fourteenth century, the Viennese Jew David Steuss, originated from the town of Klosterneuburg, where in the shadow of the Priory of the Canons Regular (who made good business partners), Jews had settled already in the late thirteenth century. While the Steuss family owed their wealth and importance to the Jewess Plume, David’s grandmother, who had spent her life in Klosterneuburg, already Plume’s son Hendlein had moved to Vienna.¹³⁴ Most of the more successful moneylending families usually either had family members that lived in the bigger cities, or were part-time living in the city themselves, with the rural abode being more and more ‘degraded’ to a secondary residence.

Migration from urban centers to the countryside was rare, and, if it happened, it was often only temporarily. Some moves to the countryside might have had professional reasons: Abrech of Friesach, a high-profile Carinthian moneylender of the 1360s, who had negotiated the donation of the cemetery of Friesach in 1352,¹³⁵ apparently moved to the market town of Straßburg for at least a year.

¹³² Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 189, n. 194.

¹³³ Lohrmann, *Judenrecht and Judenpolitik* (see note 44), 211 (with a list of towns and villages from where Jews had migrated to Vienna in the second half of the fourteenth century). See, generally, Gilomen, “Jüdische Migration” (see note 12), for an overview over the research concerning Jewish migration, 124–25.

¹³⁴ Wiedl, “Kriegskassen” (see note 42), 248–49; Eveline Brugger, “Loans of the Father: Business Succession in Families of Jewish Moneylenders in Late Medieval Austria,” *Generations in Towns. Succession and Success in Pre-Industrial Urban Societies*, ed. Finn-Einar Eliassen and Katalin Szende (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 112–129; here 117–18. This migration pattern can even be detected between cities with smaller and more important Jewish communities, such as the Salzburg-based family of Aron, whose members one-by-one move to city town of Regensburg, which might not have been a larger town but housed the much more important and flourishing Jewish community.

¹³⁵ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 2* (see note 40), 134, n. 725. In 1354, the bishop of Bamberg gave permission to erect the synagogue at Villach to a Jew Aschrok of Friesach, who, despite the misspelled name, might be identified with Abrech; see id., 153, n. 767, and Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 166, 223; Wiedl, “Jews and the City” (see note 13), 282

Although Jews lived in Straßburg since the late thirteenth century,¹³⁶ Abrech's stay there was most likely due to the fact that Straßburg was the residence of the bishops of Gurk, who were among his business partners; in 1354, he had obviously already returned to Friesach. Abraham of Obervellach had been master of the mint of the Counts of Görz and had done some additional business there that continued past his holding the office.¹³⁷ Other moves, however, are less easily explained. Hetschel, son of Rabbi Israel of Krems, exchanged Krems for Herzogenburg around 1370,¹³⁸ and 50 years earlier, two sons of important Viennese financiers, Mordechai, son of Schwärzlein, and Kalman, son of Lebman, moved to Zistersdorf and Hainburg respectively.

While Mordechai had been engaged in high-end moneylending with his brothers Pessach, Mosche, and Isak in Vienna until 1317,¹³⁹ Kalman had never attained the same importance as his father and his brother Gutman; with the move to the countryside, however, both ceased to appear in any business deals. Prosperity could nevertheless be gained in the countryside as well—when the Austrian dukes Albrecht III and Leopold III (1351–1386) appointed five tax collectors (generally known as *absamer*) between 1365 and 1379, one of them was David of Eggenburg, a small town in the north of Lower Austria.¹⁴⁰ In the following years, several members of the Jewish community at Perchtoldsdorf joined the office.¹⁴¹

Jewish families who were a few steps lower on the business scale seemed to be more prone to remain in the countryside—Leb of Gars, who moved to the slightly bigger but still not 'urban' town of Retz, has been mentioned already. Abraham, son of Lazarus of Eggenburg, might be identified with his namesake who was living in Zwettl for some years.¹⁴² The towns of Eggenburg and Zwettl are about

¹³⁶ Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 226–29.

¹³⁷ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 40), 274, n. 1018; Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten* (see note 14), 234; see for other Jewish mint masters in Carinthia (in the towns of St. Veit and Völkermarkt) id., 140.

¹³⁸ See the contribution of Eveline Brugger in this volume.

¹³⁹ Brugger, *Adel und Juden* (see note 15), 55–59, particularly on the connection to the Buchberg family.

¹⁴⁰ Ernst Freiherr von Schwind and Alphons Dopsch, *Ausgewählte Urkunden zur Verfassungs-Geschichte der deutsch-österreichischen Erblände im Mittelalter* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagnerschen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1895), 266–68, n. 136; Lackner, *Regesta Habsburgica* 5/1 (see note 44), 40, n. 47. The original document has been lost, and the (undated) copies only name two of the altogether five Jewish *absamer*: Swogel of Linz and David of Eggenburg; see Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 44) 286.

¹⁴¹ *Germania Judaica* III/2 (see note 40), 1095.

¹⁴² See Birgit Wiedl, "Die Zwettler Siegeltaschen, ein historisches Puzzle," *Zwischen den Zeilen: 20 Jahre Institut für jüdische Geschichte Österreichs* (2008), 32–38, (see for the internet version: http://injoest.ac.at/upload/JME2008_17_38.pdf last accessed on Jan. 16, 2012). See for the fragments Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 1 (see note 4), 190–91, n. 196, 196, n. 206, 198–99, n. 210, 213–14, n. 234, 237–39, ns. 275–76, 265–66, n. 316, for scans see www.monasterium.net (collaborative archive,

50 kilometers apart and both located in the hilly and forest-dominated northwest of Lower Austria, which would have meant rather similar living conditions for Abraham, at least with regard to climate and surroundings. While Lazarus and his son are the only Jews documented for Eggenburg at this time,¹⁴³ Jewish presence at Zwettl might have been more extensive than it appears at first glance. Although apart from Abraham, one other Jew appears in business documents,¹⁴⁴ a rabbinical response of the famous Meir of Rothenburg from the late thirteenth century that deals with the re-marriage of a widow after a Jew of Zwettl who had been murdered, allows a different interpretation. When Rabbi Meir came to the conclusion that the remarriage should be allowed, he did so under the condition that Rabbi Eliezer “as well as the other rabbis that are present there” agree. While the identity of Rabbi Eliezer and the others remain unclear—the manuscript also mentions Krems—it has been suggested that there was a rabbi present in Zwettl, at least for some time.¹⁴⁵

A similar migration pattern of the members of a Jewish family that lived in the countryside can be traced for the brothers Joseph and Slomlein of Zistersdorf: in 1383, the Jews Yczka of Zistersdorf and Hesklein of Raabs granted a loan to the Scottish Abbey in Vienna. In 1402, Hesklein still lived in Raabs, presumably together with his son Pfefferlein, while his grandson Joseph had moved to Zistersdorf, where he did business not only together with his brother Slomlein but also, from 1408 onwards, with Freudlein, Hesklein’s widow (and thus presumably his grandmother).¹⁴⁶

Already with the rule of duke Rudolph IV (r. 1358–1365), the ducal protection of the Austrian Jews had begun to wane. The legal status of the Austrian Jewry remained unchanged from 1244 until the end of Jewish life in Austria, but the ducal concept of granting (and actively exerting) protection not only in exchange for taxation, but also as an integral part of the ruler’s sovereignty¹⁴⁷ that had been

Archivbestände Zwettl, Stiftsarchiv).

¹⁴³ In the second half of the fourteenth century, Jewish settlement in Eggenburg seemed to be more extensive since a synagogue is documented for this time; see Keil, “Gemeinde und Kultur” (see note 9), 23; *Germania Judaica* III/1 (see note 40), 284–85.

¹⁴⁴ Jeschem, 1337, Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten 1* (see note 4), 232, n. 418. See Eveline Brugger, “... daz wier schullen gelten Abraham dem juden von Zwetel...” *Mittelalterliche Spuren jüdischen Lebens im Waldviertel*, *Jüdisches Leben in Zwettl. Koexistenz und Verfolgung, vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Friedel Moll, Zwettler Zeitzeichen, 13 (Zwettl: Eigenverlag der Stadt, 2009), 8–15.

¹⁴⁵ Simcha Emanuel, “Unpublished Responsa of R. Meir of Rothenburg” *Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages* (see note 9), 282–93; here 288–90.

¹⁴⁶ Geyer and Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern* (see note 35), 14–15, n. 45 (Yczka of Zistersdorf, Hesklein of Raabs), 342–43, n. 1133 (Hesklein [Heschken], Pfefferlein, and Joseph), 429, n. 1430 (Joseph, Slomlein, and Freudlein).

¹⁴⁷ Toch, *Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 3), 49–51 and 102–03 on the idea of the protection of the Jewry as part of the ‘classical virtues of a ruler’ (my translation).

at the base of the 1244 privilege, had changed into mere financial exploitation. While it were the big communities such as Krems as well as individual and particularly wealthy Jews,¹⁴⁸ who suffered most from the ducal policy toward their Jews,¹⁴⁹ the overall situation of the Austrian Jewry worsened perceptibly toward the end of the century. The reasons that led to the wide-ranging persecutions and expulsions of Jews in the fifteenth centuries were manifold¹⁵⁰; economic rivalry of Christians who began to push (officially) into the moneylending sector, anti-Jewish concepts and sentiments that were repeated, permeated, and enhanced by theology, literature, and iconography alike, together with the rapidly spreading ideas of Jewish well-poisoning, ritual murder, and host desecration being only the most important ones. In Austria, it was the events of the Vienna Gesera,¹⁵¹ the murdering and expulsion of the Jews at the instigation of Duke Albrecht V (1397–1439, the later King Albrecht II) in 1420/1421 that brought a violent end to Jewish life. In the text of the Gesera, the Yiddish narration that tells of the incarceration of the Viennese Jews, their torture and murder, a few sites of rural settlement are mentioned as places of persecution—Langenlois, Herzogenburg, Laa, Zistersdorf, Hainburg, Marchegg, Mörtersdorf, Vitis, and Winkel, bearing a last witness to a Jewish life that had extended beyond the boundaries of the urban centers. When Jews started to returned to the Austrian territories in greater number in the course of the sixteenth century, it would be under different conditions, with no perceptible continuity of their medieval ancestors.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ David Steuss, the by far wealthiest Jewish businessman, was imprisoned in 1383 and only set free against a ransom of 50,000 pound pennies; see “Wiener Annalen 1348–1404,” *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Deutsche Chroniken*, 6, ed. Josef Seemüller (Hanover and Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1909), 231–242; here S. 232.

¹⁴⁹ For a closer look at the ducal policy, see the contribution of Eveline Brugger in this volume.

¹⁵⁰ *Germania Judaica* III/3 (see note 40), 2298–2327, for an analysis of the economic aspects, see David Nirenberg, “Warum der König die Juden beschützen musste, und warum er sie verfolgen musste,” *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard Jussen (Munich: Beck, 2005), 225–40 and 390–92, for Austria, see Brugger, “Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter” (see note 10), 208–27.

¹⁵¹ Goldmann, *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse* (see note 54), 112–33 (introduction and edition); Samuel Krauss, *Die Wiener Geserah vom Jahre 1421* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1920), particularly 80–92 on the Jewish settlements hit by the persecution.

¹⁵² Barbara Staudinger, “Gantze Dörffer voll Juden”. *Juden in Niederösterreich 1496–1670* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2005), and ead., “Die Zeit der Landjuden und der Wiener Judenstadt 1496–1670/71” *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (see note 9), 229–338.



Fig. 1: Main places of small-town and rural Jewish settlement in Austria in the Middle Ages (smaller dots, the bigger dots indicate the main urban centers).



Fig. 2: Two obligations of Arnold von Fritzelsdorf and Konrad von Kirchberg for the Jew Hendlein of Gmünd, around 1326, both cut up and used as seal pouches (Zisterzienserstift Zwettl, Archiv und Bibliothek)

Chapter 20

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Small Town, Big Business: A Wealthy Jewish Moneylender in the Austrian Countryside

Sources on Jewish money-lending, especially business charters, from the late medieval duchy of Austria indicate that “dynasties” of Jewish financiers were a common occurrence among the economic elite of the Jewish communities. Some of the earliest sources on Jewish business transactions in Austria, dating from the mid-thirteenth century, already document family members working together; this practice can be found among many of the more prominent families of Jewish financiers during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, which were the most prosperous time of Jewish business in Austria. There is plenty of evidence for relatives—whether the relation was based on blood or on marriage—working together in their business dealings. The family members in question weren’t (always) living in the same place, but cooperated with relatives whose business was based in another town, sometimes even another territory.¹ In most of these cases, we can observe a tendency among successful business families to gravitate toward the bigger, municipal centers—the most important Jewish businessmen

¹ Eveline Brugger, “Loans of the Father: Business Succession in Families of Jewish Moneylenders in Late Medieval Austria,” *Generations in Towns. Succession and Success in Pre-Industrial Urban Societies*, ed. Finn-Einar Eliassen and Katalin Szende (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 112–29; here 113–19. On the topic of Jewish business charters in Austria, see the results of the ongoing publication project “Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich” funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter*. Vol. 1: *Von den Anfängen bis 1338*. Vol. 2: 1339–1365. Vol. 3: 1366–1386 (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: Studien Verlag, 2005, 2010, vol. 3 forthcoming in 2012): http://injoest.ac.at/projekte/laufend/mittelalterliche_judenurkunden/index.php?lang=EN

and -women were usually found in the most important cities that housed the biggest, most prosperous Jewish communities, especially in Vienna and Krems. Even if a family had far-reaching business connections or even “branch offices” in smaller communities, they usually chose the most important city for their “head office”. A big city provided more business opportunities for the elite of Jewish financiers, whose clients usually came from the upper-class citizenry and the nobility. In addition, ducal protection was stronger and more effective, thus lessening the threat of persecution for the Jewish population.²

Not all Jewish business families were in the financial business exclusively. On the contrary, it was quite common among the Jewish elite to have both rabbis and financiers among the members of a family. It was not rare for rabbis to be moneylenders themselves, either, since a rabbi or scholar was not supposed to receive financial compensation for his services and therefore had to look for other means to make a living.³

One of the most impressive examples of a family who was famous both for the scholars and for the wealthy businessmen it produced is the family of Rabbi Israel of Krems. Israel's son Hetschel (Chaim)⁴ of Herzogenburg counted among the most prominent Jewish financiers in the duchy of Austria in the second half of the fourteenth century, but also had a reputation as a scholar. Hetschel's son Aron Blümlein was rabbi in Krems, then in Vienna, where he fell victim to the Gesera, the murder or expulsion of all Austrian Jews instigated by Duke Albrecht V in 1420/1421. Hetschel's grandson Rabbi Israel Isserlein was a famous scholar in the Styrian towns of Marburg (Maribor in today's Republic of Slovenia) and Wiener Neustadt, but also gave loans on occasion. Many family members of these rabbis

² The Pulkau persecution in 1338, which marks the first outbreak of wide-spread violence against the Jewish population in the duchy of Austria, drastically showed the limits of the protection that the authorities were able to give the Jews in more remote places. See Eveline Brugger, “Von der Ansiedlung bis zur Vertreibung—Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter,” Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Albert Lichtblau, Christoph Lind, and Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 123–228; here 216–19, and Birgit Wiedl's contribution to the present volume.

³ Martha Keil, “Gemeinde und Kultur—Die mittelalterlichen Grundlagen jüdischen Lebens in Österreich,” *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (see note 2), 15–122; here 63–64.

⁴ Most male Jews were given a secular, “everyday” name in the vernacular and a sacred Hebrew name (*shem ha-kodesh*) to be used during religious ceremonies and for official Hebrew documents. Martha Keil, “‘Petachja, genannt Zecherl’: Namen und Beinamen von Juden im deutschen Sprachraum des Spätmittelalters,” *Personennamen und Identität. Namengebung und Namengebrauch als Anzeiger individueller Bestimmung und gruppenbezogener Zuordnung*, ed. Reinhard Härtel. *Grazer grundwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 3: Schriftenreihe der Akademie Friesach, 2 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt Graz, Austria, 1997), 119–46; here 129–33.

were active as moneylenders; several of the men also held the office of *absamer* (ducal tax collector) for the Jewry of their territory.⁵

Overall, the descendants of Rabbi Israel of Krems would constitute a rather typical, though perhaps exceptionally successful, group among the elite of Jewish families in late medieval Austria if it weren't for the aforementioned Hetschel of Herzogenburg.

The small countryside town of Herzogenburg, situated south of the river Danube about 60 kilometers west of Vienna in the province of Lower Austria, developed out of a marketplace next to a priory of Canons Regular (founded in 1112). The area is rural even today; winegrowing has been the most important branch of agriculture since the Middle Ages, and even though there is evidence of trade (mostly wine) in and from Herzogenburg during the Middle Ages as well, it was on a fairly small scale.⁶ Even though the big and important Jewish community of Krems was only 20 kilometers away, there is very little evidence of Jewish settlement in Herzogenburg until the middle of the fourteenth century, and it is surprising—to say the least—that a Jewish businessman of Hetschel's caliber, who for a time was the second most important Jewish financier in the duchy of Austria (surpassed only by the famous David Steuss of Vienna)⁷ would be willing to choose such a remote place for his main residence during what can safely be considered the heyday of Jewish moneylending in medieval Austria.

In order to analyze the possible reasons for Hetschel's decision, it is necessary to put it in context with the general situation of Jews in the medieval duchy of Austria. Jewish life in Austria started later than in many other territories of the Holy Roman Empire; it was only during the first decades of the thirteenth century that Jewish communities began to develop. What followed was a lengthy struggle for the actual rule over the Jews between the Austrian duke and the emperor, which eventually ended in favor of the duke. Based on a generous ducal privilege issued in 1244, the Austrian dukes granted their Jews protection and favors in exchange for considerable taxation and ducal control of Jewish business.⁸ This arrangement worked smoothly during the thirteenth century, which was mostly a time of peace and prosperity for the Austrian Jewry. Jewish settlement was spreading; from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, there are numerous business charters that show Jews doing business—not only moneylending, but also

⁵ *Germania Judaica* III/1, 2, 3: 1350–1519, ed. Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer, and Yacov Guggenheim (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1987, 1995, 2003), III/1, 679 (Aron Blümlein); III/2, 1606 (David Steuss), 1625–1626 (Israel Isserlein).

⁶ Wolfgang Hans Payrich, *Das Stift Herzogenburg. Die 875jährige Geschichte des Augustiner-Chorherrenstiftes St. Georgen-Herzogenburg von 1112–1987* (Katholisch-theologische Hochschule Linz: Unpublished Master's thesis, 1987), 1–50.

⁷ On David Steuss and his family, see Brugger, "Loans of the Father" (see note 1), 117–18.

⁸ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten*. vol. 1 (see note 1), 35–38, n. 25.

selling and buying land — with noblemen, monasteries and the inhabitants both of the cities and of rural communities.⁹

This period was one of economic change, which increased the importance of money-based economy. Especially noble families often had difficulties in coping with this process, although some proved remarkably apt at working the new system in their favor. In the course of these developments, there is frequent evidence for the raising of money from Jewish moneylenders. The sources indicate many financial connections between the elite of Jewish financiers and noble debtors. Besides, the duke himself made use of Jewish loans, either to satisfy his own financial needs or as an instrument of power in his struggle against the opposing nobility by interfering in the business transactions between noblemen and their Jewish creditors.¹⁰

This dependency on ducal protection left the Jews in Austrian towns in a precarious situation during the first half of the fourteenth century, which brought about the first major persecutions of Jews in the duchy of Austria.¹¹ As opposed to most German cities, Austrian towns had little power over the Jewish community in their midst, which also meant no financial profit and hence no reason to value or protect them, while Jewish business was often seen as unwelcome competition and Jewish privileges were considered an unfair economic advantage over Christians.¹² It is therefore no coincidence that the first persecutions were carried out by the citizenry of the towns where the Jews lived, not by some higher authority, secular or ecclesiastical. Ducal protection often

⁹ Brugger, "Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter" (see note 2), 127–29, 169–80; *Germania Judaica* III/3 (see note 5), 1977–85.

¹⁰ Eveline Brugger, *Adel und Juden in Niederösterreich. Die Beziehungen niederösterreichischer Adelsfamilien zur jüdischen Führungsschicht von den Anfängen bis zur Pulkauer Verfolgung 1338* (St. Pölten: Niederösterreichisches Institut für Landeskunde, 2004), 32–39, 59–64; Eveline Brugger, "Do musten da hin zue den iuden varn — die Rolle(n) jüdischer Geldgeber im spätmittelalterlichen Österreich," *Ein Thema — zwei Perspektiven. Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, ed. Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2007), 122–38; here 123–30.

¹¹ Brugger, "Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter" (see note 2), 210–19; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales. The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 57–65. See also Eveline Brugger, "Neighbours, Business Partners, Victims: Jewish-Christian Interaction in Austrian Towns During the Persecutions of the Fourteenth Century," *Intricate Interfaith Networks: Quotidian Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ephraim Shoam-Steiner (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming, 2012); Birgit Wiedl, "The Host on the Doorstep: Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders in an Alleged Host Desecration in Fourteenth-Century Austria," *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Connie Scarborough. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming).

¹² Birgit Wiedl, "Jews and the City: Parameters of Jewish Urban Life in Late Medieval Austria," *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 273–308; here 281.

proved ineffective, even though the dukes usually attempted to punish the attackers afterwards; thus, they were at least able to keep the Jews of Austria mostly safe during the period of the Black Plague, which brought about the persecution of Jews in many other territories of the Holy Roman Empire around the mid-fourteenth century.¹³

Yet even in Austria, sources from the decades after the plague indicate a deterioration of the situation of the Jewish population. Business charters are more numerous than before, but they indicate a decline in the protection which Jewish business received from the duke. Therefore, while the "official" legal status of the Austrian Jews did not change, their actual position became more precarious than before. A clear indication of this phenomenon is the growing number of *Tötbriefe* ("killing letters"), ducal decrees through which the duke nullified the debts of noblemen he wished to favor without any compensation for the Jewish moneylender in question.¹⁴ Hand in hand with that went ducal attempts to limit the mobility of rich Jewish businessmen by seizing their property if the Jew in question left the duke's territory without permission.¹⁵

These actions were part of an ongoing development that slowly changed the overall status of Austrian Jews for the worse in the course of the fourteenth century. The Jews became one source of ducal income among many, while their status as a group under the direct protection of the duke lost significance. The loosening of the ducal protection can probably be seen most clearly in the fact that from the 1330s onward, the duke occasionally even allowed a nobleman to whom he was indebted to hold the wealthiest Jews of a city captive until they had paid him the money the duke owed.¹⁶ Several times during the 1370s, the dukes themselves held the wealthiest Austrian Jews captive to extort enormous sums of ransom from them.¹⁷

Yet before the Jewish moneylending business began to feel the full impact of this policy, the third quarter of the fourteenth century became the time of the biggest business transactions. It is during that period that Hetschel of Herzogenburg got his remarkable career underway.

Hetschel was first mentioned in 1369, when his brother Zecherl granted a small loan of three pounds. The document identifies Hetschel and Zecherl as the sons

¹³ Jörg R. Müller, "Erez gezerah—'Land of Persecution': Pogroms Against the Jews in the regnum Teutonicum From c. 1280 to 1350," *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, ed. Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 245–60; here 256–57; Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich*. 2nd ed. Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 44 (1998; Munich: Oldenburg, 2003), 62–63.

¹⁴ Klaus Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik im mittelalterlichen Österreich* (Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau, 1990), 171–73.

¹⁵ Brugger, "Loans of the Father" (see note 1), 119–23.

¹⁶ Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten*, vol. 1 (see note 1), 316–17, n. 407.

¹⁷ Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 14), 216–17.

of Master (i. e., Rabbi) Israel of Krems. There is no mention in the document as to where Israel's sons had their residence, but it bears the seal of the Jewish judge of Herzogenburg, who acted as witness.¹⁸

The Jewish judge (*iudex Iudeorum*) was a Christian town official, usually a member of the urban elite, who was responsible for legal matters that involved both Jewish and Christian parties. He was often asked to corroborate business charters with his seal because very few Jews used seals.¹⁹ Since Herzogenburg was not the residence of the Christian debtor, the involvement of the Jewish judge of Herzogenburg in the transaction can be seen as an indication that the Jewish creditors lived there or at least had some connection to the town. This is rather surprising in itself because there is no indication at this point that the number of Jews living in Herzogenburg would have warranted the appointment of a Jewish judge for them—even more so since the office rarely appears at all in market towns like Herzogenburg.

There are very few mentions of Jews living in Herzogenburg before the middle of the fourteenth century, although we know of one David of Herzogenburg who later moved to Regensburg—one of the most important Jewish communities in the Holy Roman Empire—and made a career as a businessman there, indicating a surprising connection between a small, unremarkable Austrian countryside town and one of the main centers of Jewish settlement and business activity in the Empire.²⁰ It has been speculated that Hetschel's family originated from Regensburg because in the fifteenth century, Hetschel's grandson Rabbi Israel Isserlein mentioned the graves of his forefathers in the city of Regensburg.²¹

While family connections between two important Jewish communities such as Krems and Regensburg were very common,²² the question remains why a Jewish

¹⁸ Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv (Provincial Archives of Lower Austria), Urkunden des Ständischen Archivs n. 5360; Hannelore Grahmmer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg und seine Familie," *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich*, ed. Martha Keil and Klaus Lohrmann (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1994), 100–20; here 100.

¹⁹ The standard method of corroboration for Hebrew documents was the issuer's (and sometimes the witnesses') signature. Only a select few Jews, all members of the financial elite, chose to adapt the Christian custom of using seals in their business dealings with non-Jewish customers as a demonstration of their important position. Martha Keil, "Ein Regensburger Judensiegel des 13. Jahrhunderts: Zur Interpretation des Siegels des Peter bar Mosche haLevi," *Aschkenas: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 1 (1991), 135–50; here 135–40.

²⁰ *Germania Judaica* III/2 (see note 5), 1178–230. David of Herzogenburg makes two appearances in sources from Regensburg in the 1350s: Brugger and Wiedl, *Regesten* 2 (see note 1), 120, n. 692, 167–68, n. 799. In 1363, *David iudeus, filius Hedlini de Herczogenburga*—likely the same David—is mentioned in a rent roll of the Lower Austrian monastery of Göttweig, indicating that David returned to Herzogenburg at some point during the late 1350s or early 1360s. Adalbert Fuchs, *Urkunden und Regesten zur Geschichte des Benediktinerstiftes Göttweig*. Vol. 1: 1058–1400. *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, series II, 51 (Vienna: Gerold, 1901), 536, n. 602.

²¹ Grahmmer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg" (see note 18), 102.

²² Brugger, "Loans of the Father" (see note 1), 118–19.

businessman from an important family would leave the big communities behind and choose the small, rural town of Herzogenburg as his residence.

There are numerous sources on Hetschel's extensive business activities in Herzogenburg between the years 1369 and 1392, but they tell us little about his immediate family except for the standard mention of his father Israel of Krems. The name of Hetschel's wife is unknown; the business charter that indicates his death in 1392 gives us the names of four of his five sons. His fifth and most famous son, Rabbi Aron Blümlein of Vienna who died as a martyr during the Gesera, is only known from Hebrew sources.²³ Hetschel himself also enjoyed a reputation as a man of learning, even though his scholarly standing did not measure up to his importance as a financier.²⁴

Hetschel's family was extremely well-connected, as it was the norm for the members of the Jewish elite. Hetschel himself upheld his close connection to Krems, his father's residence, throughout his life; besides Krems, his relations can be found among the leading members of the Jewish communities of Vienna and Salzburg. His son Aron Blümlein was rabbi of Krems for at least a decade before he took office in Vienna in 1418. Business transactions in Krems and Vienna are on record for Hetschel's sons Zecherl (Petachja, father to Rabbi Israel Isserlein), Frenzelein, and Jeklein, although none of them ever matched Hetschel's business standing; his fifth son Israel is only mentioned once together with his brothers in 1392.²⁵

It is interesting to note that we only know the name of one female family member: Roslein, widow of Hetschel's son Frenzelein, who granted two loans in 1415 and 1416.²⁶ It is rather unusual for the women from a family of the Jewish elite to remain almost invisible in business sources; even though no other Jewish woman in late medieval Austria ever matched the importance of Plume of Klosterneuburg, "founding mother" to the Steuss dynasty in Vienna, many Jewish women (most often widows) took part in their family's business dealings and were active as moneylenders together with other family members or on their own.²⁷

²³ Grahammer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg" (see note 18), 103, 116–17. *Germania Judaica* III/1 (see note 5), 679.

²⁴ *Germania Judaica* III/1 (see note 5), 553.

²⁵ Grahammer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg" (see note 18), 117–20.

²⁶ Rudolf Geyer and Leopold Sailer, *Urkunden aus Wiener Grundbüchern zur Geschichte der Wiener Juden im Mittelalter. Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschösterreich* 10 (Vienna: Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1931), 510–11, n. 1708, n. 1713. Roslein's nephew Isserlein, son of Zecherl of Krems, who acted as her business partner in the document from 1415, was the future Rabbi Israel Isserlein of Marburg/Wiener Neustadt.

²⁷ Martha Keil, "Geschäftserfolg und Steuerschulden: Jüdische Frauen in österreichischen Städten des Spätmittelalters," *Frauen in der Stadt*, ed. Günther Hödl et al. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Städte Mitteleuropas, 18—Schriftenreihe der Akademie Friesach, 7 (Linz: Landesverlag, 2003), 37–62; here 51. Martha Keil, "'Maistrin' und Geschäftsfrau: Jüdische Oberschichtfrauen im spätmittelalterlichen Österreich," *Die jüdische Familie in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Sabine Hödl

Some of Hetschel's descendants occasionally appear as "Jews of Herzogenburg" in source texts, yet in most cases this seems to have been an indication of their place of origin, not of their residence.²⁸ There is generally not much to suggest that Hetschel's family ever considered Herzogenburg the center of their life or their business activities, even though Hetschel himself seems to have spent most of his adult life there—in 1390, shortly before his death, his house in Herzogenburg is mentioned in a charter from the archives of the Herzogenburg Priory.²⁹

Hetschel's business contacts with Christian customers were not focused on Herzogenburg at all; the aforementioned charter indicating the location of his house is his only mention in the priory archives, which contain mostly local material. Hetschel's usual customers were members of the Christian nobility, both from Austria and from neighboring territories, or of the upper classes of the Viennese citizenry; entire municipalities, such as Vienna and Brunn (Brno) in Moravia, also counted among his debtors. Even though he also granted smaller loans to Viennese craftsmen on occasion, there is no indication that he had significant business contacts with the residents of the town he lived in, or with the population from the close vicinity.³⁰ Hetschel was the undisputed number two among the Austrian Jewish financiers of his time, only surpassed by the famous David Steuss of Vienna; for the inhabitants of a small countryside town, a businessman of his standing was obviously out of their league even if he lived right next to them.

Overall, it appears that Hetschel merely transferred his family business to a branch office without changing the way that business was run. Practical problems with his relocation are unlikely: Jewish businessmen were extremely mobile as a rule, and while Christian rulers sometimes punished them if they left their territory, that was not an issue with Hetschel's move from Krems to Herzogenburg.³¹ Neither was the somewhat remote location of Hetschel's new residence: first, because he did a lot of traveling (his connection to Krems, his place of origin, in particular remained strong throughout his life), and also because his status as a financier for the Christian elites was important enough for prospective creditors to come to him if necessary.

The question remains why Hetschel chose Herzogenburg in the first place. Other important Jewish businessmen sometimes relocated their business to small, comparatively insignificant places if the ruler of the territory motivated them to do so by promising them a special privilege that granted them exemption from the general fiscal obligations of the territory's Jewry. Such a "privileged" Jew would

and Martha Keil (Berlin and Bodenheim bei Mainz: Philo Verlag, 1999), 27–50; here 36.

²⁸ Keil, "Namen und Beinamen" (see note 3), 124–25.

²⁹ Stiftsarchiv Herzogenburg (Archives of the Herzogenburg Priory), A.n.115.

³⁰ Grammer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg" (see note 18), 106–12.

³¹ Brugger, "Loans of the Father" (see note 1), 119–23.

be granted special rights by the ruler, would receive a better legal status than the other Jews and direct protection from the ruler in exchange for paying his or her taxes separately instead of having to contribute to the general Jewish tax of the territory. Some rulers even tried to lure wealthy Jewish businessmen away from neighboring territories with the promise of such special privileges.³² However, we do not know of any special ducal privileges that might have encouraged Hetschel to move, and since he remained in the territory of the same ruler when moving from Krems to Herzogenburg, it seems unlikely that this was his reason for relocating his business. Might Hetschel have been trying to remove himself a little from the influence of the duke, which would have been much more immediate in an urban center like Krems or—even more so—Vienna?

A closer look at the ducal policy toward Jews in Austria around 1370 provides some clues why Hetschel might have been keen on putting some additional distance between himself and the Habsburg brothers Albrecht and Leopold, who were dukes of Austria at the time. After several decades of increasing pressure on Jewish business, Albrecht and Leopold went one step further in 1370/1371. According to narrative sources, the dukes took all Jews in their cities captive and forced them to pay enormous sums of ransom in order to regain their freedom.³³ The Jewry of Krems had to pay 40,000 pounds, and since Hetschel is first explicitly mentioned as a Jew of Herzogenburg shortly after, it seems likely that this act of ducal extortion was his reason to try and separate himself financially from the Jewish community of Krems in order to avoid having to pay a portion of the ransom (which, given his family's financial standing, would probably have been substantial even though Hetschel himself was still at the beginning of his career in the moneylending business).³⁴ The downside was that greater distance to the rulers also meant weaker ducal protection in the case of a persecution, but since the last outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in the duchy of Austria was two decades in the past at the time of Hetschel's move, he probably considered it a risk worth taking.

Perhaps Hetschel chose Herzogenburg because the aforementioned David of Herzogenburg, who had moved to Regensburg twenty years earlier, was related to him and therefore provided an already existing family connection to the place. There is no evidence for an established Jewish community at the time Hetschel moved there, but the existence of a Jewish judge indicates at least a (somewhat) continuous Jewish presence for some time. During Hetschel's time in Herzogenburg, we know of several other Jews living there who were not part of

³² Brugger, "Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter" (see note 2), 146–47; Wilhelm Wadl, *Geschichte der Juden in Kärnten im Mittelalter: Mit einem Ausblick bis zum Jahre 1867*. 3rd ed. Das Kärntner Landesarchiv, 9 (1981; Klagenfurt: Verlag des Kärntner Landesarchivs, 2009), 123–25.

³³ Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik* (see note 14), 216.

³⁴ Grahammer, "Hetschel von Herzogenburg" (see note 18), 105–06.

Hetschel's immediate family. Since several of them had family connections to Krems just like Hetschel had them, Hetschel's move to Herzogenburg could have encouraged other members of his community of origin to follow his example. Unlike Hetschel, those Jews chose their business partners among the local Christian population: the Jew Trostl, son of Leubman am Eck of Krems, is mentioned twice (1372 and 1373) in the archives of the Herzogenburg Priory³⁵; a Leubman of Herzogenburg makes several appearances in Lower Austrian charters from the 1370s, indicating that this might be a case of an entire family moving from Krems to Herzogenburg and doing business there.³⁶ Leubman seems to have spent the rest of his life in Herzogenburg and obviously did well there—in 1382, the Jewess Istyr, widow of Leubman of Herzogenburg, collected a debt from a prominent Austrian nobleman.³⁷

Charters from the archives of the Herzogenburg Priory contain several further mentions of Jews in Herzogenburg during the last years of Hetschel's life: the aforementioned charter that locates Hetschel's house was issued by the Jewess Grässel, widow of Heman of Herzogenburg, and sealed by the Jewish judge of the town.³⁸ In the same year 1390, the Jew Efferl, brother-in-law of Yriman of Herzogenburg, bought a house in Herzogenburg, proving that Hetschel was not the only Jew to own a residence there.³⁹

Jewish property can be traced in Herzogenburg well into the fifteenth century, as can the continuing existence of the office of Jewish judge.⁴⁰ Hetschel's move to Herzogenburg could very well have advanced the development of Jewish settlement in his new place of residence. However, even the presence of such an important person, who played a big role as a businessman and also had some standing as a scholar, ultimately didn't bring Herzogenburg into the "inner circle" of important Jewish communities in the duchy of Austria. The town remained a rather remote countryside place as far as Jewish settlement was concerned, and during the early fifteenth century, we learn of most of its Jewish inhabitants when they appear in the sources as Jews "of Herzogenburg" after they had moved to one of the bigger communities.

³⁵ Stiftsarchiv Herzogenburg (Archives of the Herzogenburg Priory), D.n.15a, D.n.18.

³⁶ Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna), Bürgerspitalsurkunde n. 258; Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv (Provincial Archives of Lower Austria), Urkunden des Ständischen Archivs n. 897, n. 957.

³⁷ Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv (Provincial Archives of Lower Austria), Urkunden des Ständischen Archivs n. 1078.

³⁸ See footnote 29.

³⁹ Stiftsarchiv Herzogenburg (Archives of the Herzogenburg Priory), A.n.116.

⁴⁰ Eveline Brugger, "Hetschel und wer noch? Anmerkungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Herzogenburg im Mittelalter," *900 Jahre Stift Herzogenburg: Aufbrüche, Umbrüche, Kontinuität*, ed. Günther Katzler and Gabriele Stöger-Spevak (publisher to be determined, forthcoming in 2012).

Still, Jewish presence in Herzogenburg can be proved until the Gesera of 1420/1421. The Jewish report of the persecutions lists Herzogenburg as one of the destroyed communities, but unfortunately does not tell us how many Jewish inhabitants the town used to have before the persecution hit.⁴¹

⁴¹ Arthur Goldmann, *Das Judenbuch der Scheffstraße zu Wien (1389–1420)*, mit einer Schriftprobe. *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutsch-Österreich*. 1 (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1908), 127; Samuel Krauss, *Die Wiener Geserah vom Jahre 1421* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1920), 80.

Chapter 21

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Usos rerum rusticarum: Malae consuetudines, male usos lege and Peasant Rebellion as Resistance or Adaptation to Legal Change

Around 1470, the Bavarian nobleman Hans von Westemach composed *Ein Straflied* containing the quatrains:

Ich waiß ain stät, hulf billich darzü.
aber lieber machends den leuten unrü:
das sind doctor und juristen,
vor den kann sich niemant fristen!

Si hand ain büch genant das decretäl,
was in gefelt, das seit es alle mal,
nach irem willen tünd sis glosieren,
damits uns laien überfuren.

Die herren und menklich sind schuldig daran,
wann es feit von in iederman:
seit mans in der fürsten ret hab genomen,
so sei vil unräts in die land komen.¹

[I know of a profession that feigns a hand,
Yet causes much uproar in the land:

¹ Stanzas 21–23, item 123A in *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. Bis 16. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 1, ed. Rochus von Liliencron (Leipzig, 1865, reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 558–61 here 560. For a discussion of Hans von Westemach as poet and social critic, see Albrecht Classen, “Hans von Westemach: Der Pfalzgraf hieß da ziehen baß. Politische und militärische Dichtung des deutschen Spätmittelalters,” *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 26 (1987): 133–51.

I speak of jurists and doctors of law,
A more harmful lot you never saw.

They've got a book they call "Decretal",
Its meaning they feel free to wheedle.
Glosses at random they interject;
With which us laity to subject.

At fault in this are lords and others,
From whom everybody suffers.
Since princes in council ruled it may suffice,
Into the land has come much bad advice.^{2]}

Resentment of legal innovation echoed across Europe throughout the high and late Middle Ages and into the *Frühneuzeit*, across the social spectrum. Our interest here, however, is to examine the consequences of such innovation in rural communities for whom often *consuetudo est optimus interpretes legum*, i.e., custom is the best interpreter of the law, and more particularly to consider the role of law in peasant uprisings. Our argument is that rather than being inherently conservative or radical, peasants were quite aware of which legal innovations were of benefit to their concerns and which disadvantaged their position in the rural economy; and out of perceived self-interest resisted the former and adapted to the latter. Granted that such rational behavior could bear widely disparate impacts over the very *longue-durée*, the historical contingencies defining such outcomes were likely beyond the purview of even the most sophisticated contemporaries.

In his recent *Lust for Liberty*, Samuel Cohn has made a great effort to distinguish between economic and political revolts, the former supposedly differentiated by their foundation in economic oppression and exploitation, and their animus toward landlords in particular; the latter being directed against aristocratic classes and magistrates and frequently taking place in areas of disproportionate prosperity.³ Cohn's typology dovetails with Musson's argument that uprisings such as the Great Peasant Revolt of 1381 that terrorized England were a product of increasing political consciousness attendant on the growth of legal consciousness.⁴ In some respects, these typologies are simply variations on Franz's

² The translation is based in part on the freer version of Gerald Strauss, ed. and trans., *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1971), 201–02.

³ Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe 1200–1425: Italy, France, Flanders* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁴ Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants' Revolt*. Manchester Medieval Series (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), particularly Chapter 6, 217–55.

dichotomy of Old versus Godly law rebellions,⁵ or in more secular jargon, Burke's traditionalist versus radical rebellions.⁶

As with all historicist approaches, an unavoidable air of anachronism accompanies such theories. Medieval society, rural and otherwise, was viewed by medieval people in organic terms, with no line of demarcation between political and economic, and governed by custom which itself was law. Indeed, it is fair to say that life in the Middle Ages was characterized by the ubiquity of law, which defined one's every duty and every prerogative, and of which one could ill be unawares. From the peasant revolt in Normandy in 986 forward, encroachments on the traditional prerogatives of the peasantry accorded by the *usos rerum rusticarum* were denounced as *malae consuetudines* or the attempt to establish *mauvese coustume*.

Certainly, in its simplest application this principle is evident in France's *Jacquerie* of 1378. Ordered by the regent of France to stock their garrisons, a number of the knights scarce on supplies were evidently advised to confiscate the provisions of their own underlings. According to the *Chronique normande* and the *Istore et Croniques de flandres*, the peasants, amazed that the knights who were obliged to protect them instead seized their goods, rushed upon the knights and nobles and lords, and assembled themselves and killed many.⁷ According to Cohn:

⁵ Günther Franz, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, 12th ed. (1933; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 1–91.

⁶ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 173–78.

⁷ "Par ce conseil prindrent aucuns des biens de leurs homes oultrageusement, tant que les paisans distrent que les chevaliers, qui les devoient garder, avoient prins conseil de leur oster touz leurs biens. Pour ce fait s'esmeurent les paisans moult merueilleusement et coururent sur les chevaliers et sur touz les nobles et mesmes sur leurs seigneurs et s'assemblèrent et moult cruelment occirent plusieurs nobles femmes et enfans, et abatirent leurs forteresses et leurs maisons" [In accordance with this advice, several outrageously took the goods of their own men, so that the peasants were distressed that the knights who were obliged to protect them had taken counsel among themselves to seize all their goods. On this Account, the peasants rose up prodigiously and rushed upon the knights and upon all the nobles and even upon their lords and assembled themselves and most cruelly killed several noble women and children, and besieged their fortresses and their homes]. *La Chronique Normande du XIVe siècle* (Paris: A. & E. Molinier, 1882), 127–32. The non-Norman or *Istore et Croniques de Flandres*. Collection de chroniques belges inédites, pub. Par ordre du gouvernement: Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux arts de Belgique. (Brussels: Commission royale d'histoire, 1880), 85–88, makes the same observation: "Par ce conseil prirent aucun chevalier des biens de leurs homes oultrageusement et tant que pluseur paisant disoyent que li chevalier qui les devoient warder, avoyent pris conseil ensamble de leur oster tous leur biens. Pour ce fait s'esmeurent li paysant de Biauveis moult merueilleusement, et coururent sur les chevaliers et meismes sur leurs seigneurs, et s'asablèrent grant plentet, et moult cruellement ochirent pluseurs nobles femmes et enfans, et abatirent leurs forterèches et leurs maisons." Both texts are produced in Marie-Thérèse de Medeiros, *Jacques et Chroniqueurs: Une étude comparée de récits contemporains relatant la Jacquerie de 1358*. Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 7 (Paris: Éditions Honoré Champion, 1979), 195–98.

While this chronicler alone hints at an underlying economic cause for the Jacquerie, even he mentions no new or increased feudal dues or other exactions as such.⁸

Hence, Cohn considers this revolt to be the product of a political failing, rather than economic. Yet, the *Chronique normande*, which along with the corresponding non-Norman *Istoire et Croniques de flandres*, is the only account providing any explanation for the outbreak of the *Jacquerie*, clearly understands that the nobles were obligated to protect the peasants, in exchange for which the peasants owed their dues and exactions. It is not the value of the burden *per se* so much as the balance between the burdens and the benefits that counts. For this reason, it is much easier to understand peasant revolts in terms of what Barrington Moore, Jr. referred to as "objective exploitation," a diminution in the proportion of services provided by the overlord necessary to the agricultural cycle and the social cohesion of the village weighed against the privileges and material rewards the lord receives or demands in exchange.⁹ So analyzed, revolts are comprehensible as strategies appealing to the logic of the situation, though in the long run historical contingencies can produce ironic consequences, as shown by a comparison of the 1381 English Peasant Revolt and the 1525 German *Bauernkrieg* (Peasants' War), two rural risings traditionally compared with each other on the basis of their purported common ideologies founded on religious reform, anticlericalism, and divinely-sanctioned equality.¹⁰

Perhaps nowhere is Moore's socio-economic calculus more obvious than in the case of the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381. To understand the crisis of 1381, it is necessary to consider the impact of thirteenth-century legislation on the pattern of landholding and services in England. In particular, the 1290 statute *Quia emptores*¹¹ and proceedings *Quo warranto*¹² expanded at least from the Statute of Gloucester twelve years earlier, facilitated the alienation, and as important, partability of freeholds, and terminated the creation of new manors with

⁸ Cohn, *Lust for Liberty* (see note 3), 35.

⁹ Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1966), Chapter 9, 451–83, particularly his note 32.

¹⁰ As Paul Freedman notes, this view was common in older scholarship on the German *Bauernkrieg*. "The German and Catalan Peasant Revolts," *American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 39–54; here 40. These include such "classics" as M(oisei) M(endelevich), *Deutschland vor der Reformation: Abriss der Geschichte politischen Kampfes in Deutschland vor der Reformation Deutsche*, trans. Johannes Nichtweiss (1952; Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1955), and Horst Gerlach, *Der englische Bauernaufstand von 1381 und der deutsche Bauernkrieg: Ein Vergleich* (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1969). For a brief list of significant pre-1980 works, see Tom Scott, "The Peasants' War: A Historiographical Review: Part I," *The Historical Journal* 22 (1979): 693–720.

¹¹ 1290 c. 1 (*Regnal.* 18 Edw 1).

¹² See generally, Donald W. Sutherland, *Quo Warranto Proceedings in the Reign of Edward I: 1278–1294* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

appurtenant rights of court-baron. In many respects, as Stubbs had suggested long ago, this development benefitted tenants generally, sokemen, or those holding lands in socage, a tenancy by inferior but certain services of husbandry, and copyholders, essentially tenants at will, alike, since it ended the constant multiplication of mesne, or intermediate, lords standing between tenant and landlord, each jockeying to claim various rents and prerogatives.¹³

By enhancement of the security of leasehold tenure, it contributed as well to the tendency away from direct farming toward leasing evident in English agriculture after 1300,¹⁴ thereby accelerating simultaneously the tendency toward manumission, freeholders having no entitlement to maintenance and being more susceptible to rent increases. Those lords who continued in direct management were often compelled toward a sort of “welfare feudalism” to assure the smooth functioning of their estates, affording more influential peasants unprecedented degrees of freedom,¹⁵ as well as unprecedented access to courts outside the manor, given the commercial realities of the patchwork English manorial system.¹⁶ Besides, those actually in villenage—a problematic classification since it is not always easy to determine when villenage was personal, and when it was tenurial—frequently had claims to freedom as a consequence of jury service or the holding of free tenements, and English law generally favored liberty. The result was to diminish seriously the *de facto*, if not *de jure*, distinctions between tenancies, even petty serjeanties, technically a tenure by knight service due to the monarch, but *petit* insofar as the service rather than personal consisted of rendition of a token implement of war, becoming socages in effect. Some lords, realizing that historic rights were slipping away, took measures to recall and safeguard their historic rights. Such was the case in Darnall and Over, manors belonging to the Cistercians of Vale Royal in Cheshire, where the abbot in asserting his prerogatives over the villeins, or serfs, found himself confronted with litigation by peasants claiming to be free.¹⁷ Most lords were not so vigilant.

¹³ William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*. 3rd ed. 3 vols. (1874–1878; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), 2:454.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Alexander Volokh, “Property Rights and Contract Form in Medieval Europe,” *American Law and Economics Review* 11 (2009): 399–450.

¹⁵ See J(ames) A(mbrose) Raftis, *Peasant Economic Development within the English Manorial System* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ On this question of litigation by serfs in courts other than those of their lords, generally see Chris Briggs, “Seignorial Control of Villagers’ Litigation beyond the Manor in Later Medieval England,” *Historical Research* 81 (2008): 399–422.

¹⁷ See *The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey* (Lancaster and Cheshire Record Society, 1914), 117; G. G. Coulton, *Medieval Village, Manor, and Monastery* (originally *The Medieval Village* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925] (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1960), 131 and appendix 22.

With the demographic collapse following the first wave of plague in 1349, however, lords desperate to retain whatever labor services they could claim began to drudge up long since commuted and often petty obligations against which the peasantry chafed, as well as resurrecting whatever profitable rights to court-baron, that incident of manorial jurisdiction appertaining to copyholders as well as freeholders owing suit and service to the manor, they may have possessed, which customary rights had the added advantage of withstanding the more liberal common law. Indeed, old court rolls were searched for the pedigrees of erstwhile sokemen in the prospect of discovering not only that they were bond, but that as a consequence any of their freeholdings could be forfeitted to their lord.¹⁸ Such proceedings were employed as well to intimidate peasants as by the Abbey of Meaux, when the villeins rebelled at Waghen in the late 1360s,¹⁹ much as peasants in Kent, in which shire there appears to have been no personal villenage, had withheld services at Oxford and Wingham, both manors of the archbishops of Canterbury, in the 1350s and would do again in the 1380s.²⁰

Still, resistance was recurrent, as in Chevington, where seventeen of the tenants of Bury-St. Edmunds refused reaping services in 1375,²¹ and was perhaps best expressed by John Robynes of Shipton-on-Stout, who led a 1378 refusal of the tenants to hoe the prior's demesne or to stand in his court on grounds that "*non esset nisi stultitia*."²² Some of the tenants most resentful of these obligations seem to have been freeholders of one tenement, but had acquired another technically in villein socage requiring the performance of various labor services, and hence subject to Bracton's famous prescription: *et semper tenebitur ad incerta*.²³ By the

¹⁸ C(hristopher) Dyer, "The Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381," *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. R(odney) H(oward) Hilton and T(revor) H(oward) Aston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 9–42; here 24.

¹⁹ In particular, consider the history of the litigation of 1367 as set forth by Abbott Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa ab anno 1150 usque ad annum 1406* Edward Augustus Bond, ed., 3 vols. *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (Rolls Series), 43 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1866–1868), III: 127–42.

²⁰ N[igel] E. Saul, *Scenes from Provincial Life: Knightly Families in Sussex 1280–1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 121, note 95; R(odney) H(oward) Hilton, *The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England* (London, 1969), 40; Nigell[E.] Saul, *Richard III*. Yale English Monarchs Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 61.

²¹ Christopher Dyer, "The Rising of 1381 in Suffolk: Its Organized Participants," *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 36 (1988): 278–81.

²² R(odney) H(oward) Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 61; Christopher Dyer, "Small-Town Conflict in the Later Middle Ages: Events at Shipton-on-Stout," *Urban History* 19 (1992): 183–210; here 198; Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and its aftermath in Late-Medieval England* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 125.

²³ "Purum autem villenagium est, quod sic tenetur, quod ille qui tenet in villenagio sive liber sive servus, faciet de villenagio quicquid ei praeceptum fuerit, nec scire debeat sero quid facere debeat in crastino, et semper tenebitur ad incerta" [However, pure villenage is that so held that he who

1360s, in addition to the extension of the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace to cases under the Statutes of Labourers, it was not unusual for the courts to reinforce obligations of all types by the development of writs in *assumpsit*, allowing damages for either nonfeasance or misfeasance.²⁴ Furthermore, commencing in that same decade, and contrary to precedent, the courts began countenancing actions of debt for the recovery of personal judgments, a practice Blackstone described as “being generally vexatious and oppressive, by harassing the defendant with the costs of two actions instead of one.”²⁵

Peasants, too, learned to use the system to their advantage, both as individual litigants and as *consortia*. Parliamentary records from 1377 indicate peasants were collecting levies from their fellows to cover the expenses of resisting their lords’ demands, conduct anticipated as early as 1327 when the villeins of Great and Little Ogbourne in Wiltshire pooled their monies to finance their litigation.²⁶ As a consequence, England which had already become arguably the most litigious country outside the northern Italian city-states, became even more litigious to the glee of the barratrous lawyers who with their innovative pleadings and theories prospered as never before in a system ever more rife with champerty, bribery and jury intimidation.²⁷ Even John Gower, who despised the rebellious peasants, painting their portrait as crazed beasts run amuck in the first book of his *Vox clamantis*, in the sixth book seems to recognize the lawyers’ role in breaking down the social fabric, writing:

Non res set sompno visa figura rei;
Sic tibi causidicus fingens quam sepe pericla,
Est ubi plus rectum, diuaricabit iter:
Mente tibi loquitur dubia, nam nemo dolose

holds the villenage, whether he be free or serve, on account of the villenage must do whatever he is commanded to do, nor should he know what he must do the next day, and so he will always be held to indefinite services.] Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et consuetudinibus angliae*, ed. Travers Twiss. *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages: Rolls Series* (1878–1883; Nendeln/Liechtenstein]: Kraus, 1964), Book IV, Ch. 28, 5.

²⁴ On this and the expansion of actions in debt, see Robert Palmer, *English Law in the Age of the Black Death 1348–81: A transformation of Governance and Law* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 89–90.

²⁵ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1765–1769), 3:159.

²⁶ Alan Harding, “The Revolt Against the Justices,” *The English Rising*, ed. Rodney Hilton and Trevor Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 165–93; here 191.

²⁷ *Bartray* refers to the stirring up of quarrels and suits, particularly in litigation, and in many jurisdictions was and is a criminal offense. *Champerty* refers to acquisition of an interest in litigation, particularly the maintenance or funding of litigation at one’s own risk with the intention of sharing in the proceeds recovered.

Mentis secures vocibus esse potest;

...

Causidici nubs sunt ethera qui tenebrescunt,
 Lucem quo solis nemo videre potest;
 Obfuscant etenim legis clarissima iura,
 Et sua nox tetra vendicat esse diem. . .²⁸

[So often dreams disturb men without cause,
 Not the thing but a phantom of the thing perceived in sleep;
 So how often a lawyer, pretending danger to you,
 Will divert your course, when it is straightest:
 With doubtful mind he speaks to you, for no one
 Of fraudulent intent can speak with certain voice.

.....

Lawyers are clouds that darken the skies,
 That no one can see the light of the sun;
 They obscure the manifest justice of the law,
 Their loathsome night passes itself off for day. . .]

Caught in this dark night, largely between lords and laborers, were the middling tenants. They could scarce afford rising labor costs, only aggravated on one hand by the lords' efforts to maintain or reimpose servile obligations as against the economically mitigating expansion of free labor, and on the other the government's often vicious but largely ineffectual efforts to control labor costs. The latter legislative undertaking, like most ill-advised price controls served only to promote labor shortages and further wage inflation. Little wonder tenants felt hard-pressed to fulfill their obligations to their landlords. As a result, fertile lands were left lying waste for want of tenants to pay the entry fines.

The irrationality of the agricultural system is demonstrated by the market price of grain which at least until the late 1370s varied little from a half-century before.²⁹ This does not mean that the rural upper classes were having no economic difficulties, for the proliferation of vacant lands, confirmed not only anecdotally but by the documented fall in land prices, indicates decreased production which cannot be accounted for by a decline of the population alone. The abandonment of marginal lands for more fertile fields should have seen a rise in agricultural efficiency which would have caused grain prices to fall. Instead, the patchwork of tenancies which had caused lords to become more dependent on rents than

²⁸ *Vox clamantis*, *The Complete Works*, ed. G(eorge) C(ampbell) McCaulay, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902), Liber Sextus, ll. 213–18; 225–28.

²⁹ J(ames) E(dwin) Throld Rogers, *A History of Agriculture and Prices in England*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1866–1902), I: 84; II: 329–34; George A. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higherr Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England*. Cambridge Studies in Economic History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 114; Saul, *Richard II* (see note 20), 59–60.

scientific farming simultaneously prevented market forces from rationalizing the *usos rerum rusticarum*.

Any sense of community remaining in this fragmenting countryside was ultimately shattered by the introduction of the poll tax. Throughout the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth, the financial demands of the English monarchy for more universal and direct taxation, general levies in which nobles unlike their continental counterparts were not exempt, served to unite the interests of magnates and the population at large, just as the return of members of the assembly by shire rather than by town as on the continent, provided opportunity for landed alliance between magnates and gentry.³⁰ Grant the increasing inability of the nobility to maintain order, and the spreading perception that not infrequently they were indeed principal contributors to that very disorder. Concede as well the growing awareness that the role of the rural aristocracy in promoting prosperity was not only diminished, but in many cases an economic drag on the financial future. Despite all this, the upper classes nevertheless could be seen as integral to a sort of social contract wherein the landowners served as a buffer between the financial demands of the central government and the denizens of the local shire. The regressive poll tax introduced in 1377 threatened that remaining function of the aristocracy and gentry, though it was designed as a one off, and reasonably low. The second poll tax was graduated, and to some extent was within the spirit of the theretofore prevailing personal property levies. But the ill-conceived third poll tax could have only communicated to the peasantry that the representatives of the shires had neither intention nor fortitude to maintain their historical function of assuring fair apportionment of general levies.

This breakdown in the social contract is evident in pronouncements of the peasant leaders themselves. Granted that many of the chronicles and even more so subsequent works such as Thomas Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana* based thereon, were concerned in advance of *De haeretico comburendo* in 1403, with demonstrating a link between heretical sects such as the Lollards, the great English heresiarch Wycliff, and any movement that could be labeled treasonous,³¹ for which purpose surely the revolt of 1381 could fill the bill. Not surprising then, paraphrases of John Balle's sermon at Blackheath direct the attention of the reader

³⁰ This is a major argument of J(ohn) R(obert) Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament 924–1327* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³¹ "Docuit et perverse dogmata perfidy Johannis Wiclyf, et opiniones quas tenuet, et insanias falsas, et plura quae longum foret recitare. . . ." [He taught as well the perverse doctrines of the perfidious John Wycliffe and opinions which he held and false absurdities, and others which it would take much time to repeat. . . .] *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani Thomae Walsingham, quondam monachi S. Albani, Historia Anglica*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, 2 vols. Rolls Series (London: Longman, Green Longman, Robert and Green, 1864), II:32.

to the potentially sinister agricultural metaphor of weeding,³² and hence to the trope “*zizania cum tritico*” from Matthew 13, which was commonly used to describe the Wycliffian heresy, providing even the title of the most complete early fifteenth-century collation of Wycliff’s errors, Thomas Netter’s *Fasciculi zizaniorum magistri Johannis Wyclif cum tritico*.³³ Indeed, contrary to received etymological wisdom identifying the term *Lollard* with *lollen*, to sing, or in some cases mumble, one could posit an alternative etymology based on *lollium*, a common late medieval spelling of *lolium* (tares), i.e., those disposed toward or fostering heterodoxy. Still, except in some exaggerated sense of carnival the overstatements attributed to the rebels as indicative of a policy of extermination sound hollow, particularly since most of them would have been among the jurors of the county. Perhaps more illuminating and authentic in regard to the rising’s initial intentions is Balle’s brief letter to the peasants of Essex:

Iohon Schep, som tyme Seynte Marie prest of 3ork, and now of colchestre, greteth wel Iohan Nameles, and Iohan þe Mullere, and Iohon Cartere, and biddeþ hem þat þei bee war of gyle in borugh, and stondeth togidre in Godes name, and biddeþ Peres Plou₃man go to his werk, and chastise wel Hobbe þe Robbere, and takeþ wiþ 3ow Iohan Trewman, and alle his felawes, and no mo, and loke schappe 3ou to on heued, and no mo.

³² “Continuansque sermonem inceptum, nitebatur, per verba proverbi quod pro themate sumpserat, introducere et probare, ab initio omnes pares creatos a natura, servitu temper injustem oppressionem nequam hominum introductam, contra Dei voluntatem; quia, si Deo placiusset servos crease utique in principio mundi constituisset quis servus, quisve domnius, futurus fuisset. Considerarent igitur jam tempus a Deo datum eis, in quo, deposito servitutis iugo divitinae, possent, si vellent, liberatate diu concupita gaudere. Qua propter monuit ut essent viri cordati, et amore boni patris familias excolentis agrum suum, et extirpantis ac rescantis noxia gramina quae fruges solent opprimere, . . .” [And continuing the speech he had begun, he undertook through the words of the proverb he had adopted for his theme to imply and prove that from the beginning all were created equal by nature, servitude being unjust oppression introduced by evil men contrary to the will of God; for had it pleased god to create serves, surely from the beginning he would of established who in the future should be serf, who lord. Let them therefore now consider that it was given them by God to now rejoice in their long desired liberty, throwing off as they wished the yoke of servitude. Therefore, he warned them to be prudent husbandmen, cultivating their fields and uprooting and destroying the taresexplain that were accustomed to strangle the grain.] *Historia Anglia*, II:33. At this point, Walsingham has Balle advocate the dispatch of the great lords, the justices, lawyers and jurors: “et ipsi in praesenti facere festinarent. Primo, majores regni dominos occidendo, deinde, juridicos, justiciarios et juratores patris, perimendo.” [and these things they should immediately hasten to do: first, all the great lords of the kingdom should be killed, then the lawyers, justices and jurors of the country should be destroyed.]

³³ Published as *Fasciculi Zizanoiorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif Cum Tritico*, ascribed to Thomas Netter of Walden, ed. Rev. Walter Waddington Shirley. Rolls Series, 5 (London: Longman, Brown, et al., 1858).

Iohan þe Mullere haþ ygrounde small, small, small; þe Kynges sone of heuene schal paye for al. Be war or ye be wo; Knoweþ₃our freend fro₃our foo; Haveth ynow, and seith 'Hoo'; And do wel and better, and fleth synne, And sekeþ pees, and hold₃ou þerinne; And so biddeþ Iohan Trewman and alle his felawes.³⁴

[Pastor John, erstwhile priest of Saint Marie's in York, and now of Colchester, greets well John Nameless and John the Miller, and John Carter, and bids them that they be wary of guile in the town, and stand together in god's name, and bids Piers Plowman to go to his werk, and chastise well Bob the Robber, and take with you John Trueman, and all his fellows, and no more, and look to appoint to yourselves one leader, and no more.

John the Miller has ground finely / the King's son of heaven shall pay for all. / Be wary or suffer woe; / Know your friend from your foe; / Have sufficient and call pause; / And do well and better, and flee sin, / And seek peace and hold yourselves therein; / And so he bids John Trueman and all his fellows."]

For here seems evident a certain carnivalesque reification of the complaints of Langland that casts the bombast of the reported rhetoric in the light of the grotesque.³⁵ And while the chronicles identify Balle whether as author or not, with the couplet, "Whan Adam dalf, and Eve span, Wo was thane a gentelman," the question is what that rhyme signified, perhaps less to Balle, more importantly to the peasants he addressed.

There is nothing inherently revolutionary in either the pronouncement nor the sentiment behind this bit of doggerel appealing to the prelapsarian state, arguably even less so in England than on the continent, although there, too, as we shall shortly see, the epistolary proclamation of Gregory I, dutifully recorded in Gratian's *Decretum* C X11 Q2 c 68:

Cum redemptor noster totius conditor creaturae adhuc propitiates humanum voluit carnem assumere, ut divinitatis suae gratia, disrupto, quo tenebamur capti vincula servitutis, pristinae nos restitueret libertati

[When our redeemer, maker of all creatures, disposed to be merciful, deigned to assume human flesh, so that with the chains holding us captive in servitude broken by the grace of his surpassing merit, he restored us to pristine liberty]

was echoed by authors such as Eike von Repgow in the thirteenth-century *Sachsenspiegel*, and carried forward in more than one regional *Weistum*.³⁶ A number

³⁴ St. Albans MS. British Museum Royal 13. E. ix (about 1400), f. 287 a., printed in *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, ed. Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 160–01.

³⁵ Musson in passing also notes the carnival quality of the Piers references and the allusion to outlaw literature (i.e., Robin), *Medieval Law*, note 4 above, at 253.

³⁶ See Guido Kisch, *Sachsenspiegel and Bible* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990), 133–40; Alexander Ignor, *Über das allgemeine Rechtsdenken Eikes von Repgow*. Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft: Rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft,

of scholars have argued that egalitarian sentiments were common in the fourteenth century; and in England, the dominant Augustinian and Franciscan intellectual paradigms may help account for this phenomenon within the larger society. The foremost English scholars, John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, both either ignored or rejected Aristotelian formulations for a simple view of *dominium qua remedium peccati* and of the community merely as an aggregate of individual personalities, suggesting that election and consent are the *raison d'être* of the political community.³⁷

This same thinking of the post-lapsarian state as remedial, with the conditioning proviso of grace, lies at the heart of Wycliff's reasoning, though the doctrine is derived from the Augustinian Richard Fitzralph in *De pauperie salvatoris*.³⁸ These doctrines are not particularly revolutionary, for since only God knows who is in a state of grace, all *dominium* is ultimately in the disposition of civil authorities, for undeniably civil government is ordained of God. On the other hand, these theories militate in favor of a program of legal reform, albeit from above, and such reform was what the rebels originally sought from Richard, primarily an end to the poll tax, which error in judgment the government and the commons were unlikely to repeat, and the abrogation of villenage, with which neither king nor parliament had any intention of interfering, any more than the House of Lords would a century and a half later in 1537.

Whether the rebels thought their demands would be met or whether the incident was pretense and affectation, a form of protest against misgovernance in the nature of carnival, is difficult to say. What is clear is that while the government may have exacted a terrible revenge, many landowners punished their peasants extremely lightly, being in need of their services, and that some of the more extreme measures taken to resuscitate old privileges were abandoned. The trend toward leasing as more profitable than demesne farming continued, and those lands that could not be rented were not infrequently enclosed. Essentially, a negotiated settlement was achieved, but piecemeal between individual landlords and tenants.

N.F., 42 (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1984), 237; Paul Freeman, "The German and Catalan Peasant Revolts," *American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 39–54; here 46–47. For an English translation, see *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Maria Dobozy. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

³⁷ See generally, Scott L. Taylor, "Political Theory in Medieval Studies," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, 3 vols. ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), vol. 1, 1111–22.

³⁸ See generally, Gordon Leff, *Richard Fitzralph, Commentator of the Sentences: A Study of Theological Orthodoxy* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1963).

A similar pattern of landlord disengagement followed by efforts to reassert old prerogatives precedes the *Bauernkrieg* of 1525, though the route to that confrontation took a considerably different course than in England. In Germany, an agrarian crisis that began around 1310 and continued to the sixteenth century resulted in precipitous declines in grain, and hence, land prices.³⁹ As a consequence, the process of devolution already underway accelerated with the acquiescence of lords who preferred rents to services. As the manor disintegrated into legally distinguishable components of *Grundherrschaft*, *Leibherrschaft* and *Gerichtherrschaft*, *Gemeinder*, or communes, evolved to fill the vacuum, frequently agreeing to joint liability for any rents or dues on the communal lands.⁴⁰ The assemblies of property holding peasants, aside from regulating community affairs were also in charge of crop rotation, regulations pertaining to agricultural work and management of communal resources. As manors continued to disintegrate, these communes claimed as common lands much of the vacant pastures, fields, woods and streams, along with the legal rights thereto and the jurisdiction thereof.⁴¹ As in England, those most vigilant of their traditional rights and prerogatives were the great ecclesiastic lords, who more often than their lay brethren, jealously guarded and often harshly imposed their seigneurial rights, probably accounting at least in part for the anticlerical flavor of peasant risings in both regions.⁴²

As a consequence of the depression in agricultural prices, farmers were pushed toward crop diversification, intensification of markets, associations with industry and the development of processing activities: in short, with commercial markets. Ironically, the success of such attempts to avoid the vagaries of traditional agriculture had two consequences of disadvantage to the peasants. First, such an economy demanded simpler and more uniform procedures than those afforded

³⁹ Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *Communities, Politics and Reformation in Early Modern Europe*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 68 (Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 1998), Chapter 10: "Economic and Social Institutions in Late Medieval Germany," originally published in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, ed. Bob Scribner (London: Edward Arnold, 1996), 259–90. On the agrarian cycle in particular, see Thomas W. Robisheaux, "The World of the Village," *A Handbook of European History, 1400–1600. Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracey. 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994) I:79–112.

⁴⁰ On this process, see Heide Wunder, *Die bäuerliche Gemeinde in Deutschland*. Kleine Vandenhoeck-Reihe, 1483 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

⁴¹ On which aspect, see Peter Blickle, *Landschaften im Alten Reich: die Staatliche Funktion des gemeinen Mannes in Oberdeutschland* (Munich: Beck, 1973).

⁴² Indeed, there is evidence of widespread clerical forgeries. See Peter Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation to the Revolution of the Common Man*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 64 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1998), 152; Franz, *Bauernkrieg* (see note 5), 11; J. Häine, "Der Klosterbuch zu Rorschach und der St. Galler Krieg 1489–90," *Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte*, ed. Historischen Verein des Kantons St. Gallen 26 (1895): 1–272.

by the German law, and the obvious model for such legal reform was the *Corpus juris civilis*. In 1495, Maximilian I reconstituted the *Reichskammergericht*, providing that half its judges were to be university trained lawyers, which qualification soon engulfed the entire body. Other tribunals were soon inspired by this move, along with the practice of courts referring cases to university faculties, much in the manner by which governments in the Italian city-states sought *consilia*. In this way, German law was to become perhaps more Romanized than that of any other region, at least outside the Italian peninsula.

Second, this commercialization, coming as it did at the same time as territorial princes undertook to establish their authority, placed a strain on the nobility for cash, which only intensified with the inflationary pressures of the sixteenth century, as the money supply exploded due to New World specie, as well as the rapid expansion of German mining.⁴³ This largely accounts for their efforts, commencing in the mid-fifteenth century to recover any rights that could generate cash. Toward this end, Roman law, at least *chez* Irnerius and Placentius, whose views including the denigration of custom would provide the foundation for the new juridical science we call the civil law, was particularly useful in overcoming customary rights whether to common lands or jurisdiction, as was its tendency to equate villenage with the severe Roman law of slavery, and which tended to look at servitude as did Thomas Aquinas, in Aristotelean terms, as would his disciples, Ptolemy of Lucca and Giles of Rome. Indeed, it can be argued that as in England in mid-fourteenth century, Germany in the fifteenth witnessed an aristocratic effort to revitalize serfdom, albeit more prolonged and more successful than the endeavors of their cousins across the channel.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that while English peasants frequently sought protection of the common law against customary law, one of the most frequently heard demands in the plethora of German peasant revolts that preceded the great *Bauernkrieg* of 1525 was the prohibition of Roman law or foreign jurists, in the name of establishing *das alte Recht*, often evidenced by the apposite *Weisthümer*, which in turn incorporated the ideas of the *Sachsenspiegel*.⁴⁴ Read against this background, the appeal of the Twelve Articles to contemporary Lutheran ideology seem little more than a sixteenth-century "modern language redaction" of traditional pleas founded on centuries old principles. In 1514, in Württemberg,

⁴³ On the explosion in German mining activity, see Michael Mitterauer, "Produktionsweise, Siedlungsstruktur und Sozialformen im Österreichischen Montanwesen des Mittelalters und den Frühen Neuzeit," *Österreichischen Montanwesen, Produktion, Verteilung, Sozialformen*, ed. id., Sozial- und wirtschaftshistorische Studien (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1974), 234–315. Tyrol production of silver tripled between 1470 and 1520. See Rolf Sprandel, "Gewerbe und Handel 1350–1500," *Handbuch der deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* vol. I, ed. Hermann Audin and Wolfgang Zorn (Stuttgart: Union Verlag, 1971), 340–02.

⁴⁴ On this point, see note 36 above.

where Duke Ulrich had attempted to liquidate his inherited debts by a system of taxation involving the reduction of weights and measures, the *Arme Konrad* emerged, to which the Duke made some concessions and called the *Landtag*, or diet, which drew up a list of grievances, paragraphs 15 and 16 of which provided:

15. Item es soll auch bedacht warden die Beschwerd der Gelehrten, dann sie merklich und täglich bei allen Gerichten durch das ganz Land mit ir Handlung einbrechen, also das jetz und einer, dem rechtens Not ist, mit 10 Gulden Darvon nit kompt, der vielleicht vor 12 Jahren mit 10 β die Sach gar hett usgemacht. Damit warden vil Neverungen beim armen Mann ufgebracht, also, wa dem kein Einsehen geschicht, so muess man in jeglich Dorf mit der Zeit ain Doctor [*oder*] zwen setzen, die Recht sprechen.

16. Item nachdem in Vertregen und sonst in alten Breuchen und Bewohnhaiten bei Stetten und Dörfern durch die Doctores vil Zerrittungen geschehen dem gmeinen Mann zue verderblichem Nachteil und Schaden, das dann deshalb ain gemeine Ordnung und Landsrecht fürgenommen, ausgeschriben und verkündt werde und sonst die Stett und Dörfer bei iren Gerichten. Usrichtungen und alten Gewohnhaiten onverhindert der Doctor halb pleigen, wie von alter gewest ist.⁴⁵

[15. Due consideration should be given to the plague of learned lawyers that has been infesting the legal business in every court in the land, the result being that the cost of litigation which twelve years ago came to only pennies, now runs to ten gulden or more. These are grievous innovations for the common man, and they ought to be brought to an end, lest each village soon need hire one or two doctors of law to handle judicial business;

16. Inasmuch as these learned lawyers and jurists have caused disruption and disarray among the agreements and other ancient customs and usages in our town and villages—much to the injury and disadvantage of the common man—there should be instituted, drawn up, and promulgated a general reformation and renovation of the law of our land; if not, towns and villages should be left to their wonted customs, laws and courts, as these have come down to us from ancient times, lawyers and doctors of jurisprudence notwithstanding.⁴⁶]

On the very eve of the *Bauernkrieg*, peasants in June, 1524, irate at demands they abandon the harvest in order to collect snail shells to serve as spools for the ladies of the manor, rose up against Count Sigmund von Lupfen, sore pressed financially due to the prodigality of his father, and turned to Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, who was seeking a cause to return from exile imposed by the Hapbsburgs, circumstances that would serve as the catalyst for the great 1525 uprising.

⁴⁵ Württembergische Landtagsakten I (16 June 1514) printed in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges*, ed. Günther Franz. Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte der Neuzeit, 2 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1963), #8, 50–53.

⁴⁶ Strauss, ed. and trans., *Manifestations of Discontent* (see note 2), 151–52.

Ultimately, the complaints of the Stühlingen peasants were arbitrated and transferred to the Imperial Chamber Court, and the list of fifty-nine articles is among the most complete of complaints by the peasants against the nobility, detailing the degree to which a desperate lord would undertake to finesse the legal system for profit, including confiscation of both stolen and personal property of thieves, charging victims or their survivors for costs of criminal trials, denial of many traditional peasant prerogatives such as wood-gathering, prohibition of trade in salt or fowl, assertion of preeminent rights in treasure trove or other found property, levying of new taxes, claims of new banal servitudes, and of course, jury intimidation.⁴⁷ The collation is notable as well for the want of any mention of religious doctrine; the peasants' concerns were purely practical and economic, until a handful of clerics—Hubmaier at Walshut, Carlstadt at Rothenburg, Westerborg at Frankfurt, Pfeiffer and Müntzer at Mühlhausen—gained control of the rhetoric, if not the ideology, of the risings of 1524–1525.

One need not have adopted an eschatological or Messianic view of society to appreciate the legitimacy of many of the peasant grievances. Sebastian Franck, no great friend of the peasant, or of the common man generally, conceded as much in his chronicle, writing:

The Gospel teaches us to suffer oppression and injustice, not to rise up against them. It is only because this particular insurrection grew out of a protest against oppressive tithes, death duties, forced labor, tributes, interest payments, and serious grievances, that I mention it here so that in the future we may learn to keep our weapons sheathed and refrain from calling God's anger and our destruction upon our heads.⁴⁸

Indeed, the moderation of peasant demands allowed George of Waldburg to sign the Weingarten Treaty ending the Swabian phase of the war with less destruction and bloodshed than the subsequent Franconian and Thuringian phases. To some extent, Franz was right in characterizing the revolt as a confrontation between the law of the people and that of the lords, and more so when he estimated, "*Der Bauernkrieg ist ein Glied in dem Kampf der Deutschen um das Reich*"⁴⁹ (The Peasants' War is part of the fight which the Germans wage for the Empire).

And while the main body of the rebellion was brutally suppressed, as the revolt had been in England in 1381, so too in Germany negotiations with lords often produced what Blickle has labeled "contracts of lordship" which softened the burdens of serfdom, restored customary rights, reduced labor services, and

⁴⁷ The text appears in Franz, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges* (see note 45), 101–23.

⁴⁸ Strauss, note 2 above, at 169, from Sebastian Franck, *Chronik, Geschichte und Zeitbuch alleraller Nam(m)hafftigsten und Gedechnusswierdigsten Geystlichen und Weltlichen Sachen oder Handlungen von anbegin der Welt nach erschaffung des ersten Menschen, biss auff das gegenwertige jar Christi MDLXXXV*, expanded by Caloniwm Ghönnneirvm (Basel: Henricpetri, 1585), par. dlbxxix–dclxxxi.

⁴⁹ *Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg* (see note 5), 288.

improved opportunities for legal appeals.⁵⁰ *Weisthümer* themselves continued to proliferate until about 1600, and often reflected these new and negotiated “customs.” Generally, speaking, where diets engaged in negotiations with the peasants, bread and butter issues were resolved to the peasants’ satisfaction—more “political” (i.e., revolutionary) demands were rejected out of hand. Even these, however, indicated a paradigm based on diets and estates fundamentally at odds with what now is identified as the principal characteristics of the early modern state: the erosion of feudal relationships, the weakening of differences between rural and urban codes of law, the restrictions of legal autonomy for city, district and village courts, the gradual transformation of heterogeneous feudal tenants into a homogeneous body of subjects, the taxation of burghers, peasants and miners in similar measure, and increased levies for military service.⁵¹

And in some respects, this aversion of the German peasant to the inherent qualities of the modern state defines the greatest difference between the 1381 English rebellion and the 1525 *Bauernkrieg*, though that difference would have significance largely in the *longue durée*. For while both were concerned more with alleviation of financial burdens perceived as disproportionate than with assertion of any new “political” rights, purely by chance, in attempting to protect what prerogatives he had achieved during a period of seigniorial benign neglect, the English *rusticus* found himself on the side of legal developments favoring the early modern state and to which he eagerly adapted, which innovations the German peasant, also in defense of his prerogatives, sought at all costs to resist. As it happened, the 1559 judicial reforms of Ferdinand I, confirmed in the Interim of 1597, would give the owners of estates the power to administer all matters of lower judicial authority, eliminating in one stroke the power both of *Leibherren* and of *Vögte*, as well as the jurisdiction of the communes.

While improving in many respects the position of the housed peasantry, who avoided the sometimes meddling powers of the commune and gained relatively free alienability of their land, in many regions of the empire, the contract of emphyteusis⁵² created a new kind of conditional ownership, which along with the impartibility of property would create a symbiosis between peasant and state as

⁵⁰ Peter Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation to the Revolution of the Common Man*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 64 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1998), 181–84.

⁵¹ Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation* (see note 50), 119; see also his *Die Revolution von 1525*, 2nd ed. (1975; Munich and Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1981).

⁵² *Emphyteusis* is a leasehold in civil law, whether in perpetuity or for a term of years, upon reservation not only of an annual *canon*, or rent, but upon the further condition that the lessee should improve the property in some respect, whether by building, cultivating or otherwise, and certainly by avoiding waste. In general, with the exception of that latter condition against waste, the holder, or *emphyteuta*, is entitled to enjoy and alienate the property as if it were his own

householders were forced to function as unpaid bureaucrats of the regime.⁵³ By that time, Thomas Littleton, *chez* Coke,⁵⁴ had long since pronounced most eloquently: *Libertas est naturalis facultas ejus quod cuique facere libet, nisi quod de jure aut vi prohibetur* [Liberty is that natural faculty that allows one to do whatever one pleases unless restrained by law or force], which *mentalité* provided stimulus for an upward mobility of the peasantry whose gentrified descendants would successfully challenge the English nobility in a civil war over what Coke would have deemed the prescriptive customs of the realm, contemporaneous with the disastrous Thirty Years' War that wreaked havoc on Germany, allowed many Western lords to regain peasants lands, and plunged her northeastern peasantry into a servitude worse than any in the Middle Ages.

⁵³ On this development, see Hermann Rebel, *Peasant Classes: The Bureaucratization of Property and Family Relations under Habsburg Absolutism 1511–1636* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 160–67.

⁵⁴ Sir Edward Coke, *The First Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England, or a commentary on Littleton*. 16th ed. (1628; London: Hansard, 1809), 116.

Chapter 22

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Village People: The Presence of the Rural in Late-Medieval French Comedies

From Aristotle onward, comedy in Western perspective has centered on the concerns of the lower classes.¹ Thus it should come as no surprise that the issues, motifs, characters, and settings of the *menu peuple* and the rural spaces they occupy are part and parcel of many of the comic popular plays of fifteenth and early sixteenth-century France.² As scholars such as Duby and Freedman have observed, rural peoples were pillars of medieval society, if far down on the totem pole, their labor supplying foodstuffs and other commodities necessary to the populace as a whole.³ Despite the harsh exigencies of peasant life in this period—some of which come across quite clearly in the farces—there was plenty audiences would have found to laugh about in the theatrical depiction of peasants and their agrarian contexts onstage.⁴ Fields, groves and countryside feature prominently as places of

¹ “Comedy is . . . an imitation of characters of a lower type . . .” Aristotle, *Poetics*, V, *Critical Thinking Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), 51.

² In this post-Auerbach era, it is probably useful to acknowledge that there is only incomplete correspondence between representation and the reality behind it. Though what occurs in these texts is fictional, and moreover skewed towards the making of comedy, there are still elements that ground the fictions in something closer to reality than pure and simple fantasy.

³ Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), originally published as *L'économie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1982); Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: University Press, 1999).

⁴ Historians acknowledge the heavy burdens, both in the form of taxes and backbreaking labor with only rudimentary farm equipment, placed on rural populations in France following the Hundred Years' War. See Robert Boutruche, “The Devastation of Rural Areas during the Hundred Years’

work, adventure, and mischief for the characters of the farces. So, too, do the techniques, implements, and products of farming and livestock rearing, along with the work done by small tradesmen of the village.⁵ Of interest is that the plays, though no stranger to the stereotypes of peasants as ignorant or sometimes akin to the beasts they raise,⁶ depict more of a range of character types than one might suspect. Rural characters run the gamut from clumsy ignoramuses to savvy pragmatists, from craven lechers to skilled innocents. And when the extant comic plays of the late-medieval period in France touch on matters of court and nobility, it is usually to place them in humorous contrast with the less refined classes, and none emerge unscathed from the encounter.⁷ This subject is a vast undertaking, meriting an in-depth analysis such as is found in Wilhelm Blankenburg's venerable study of the treatment of French peasantry in *fabliaux*, or František Graus's more recent examination of the parodic treatment of upper and lower classes in twelfth- and thirteenth-century French literature.⁸ This brief overview of French farces (as well as a few *sotties* and *farces allegorisées*) of the late-medieval / early-modern periods that deal with matters and characters outside of an urban context, to which I have delimited this study,⁹ is intended to suggest how these popular plays conveyed the presence of the rural in ways that either set the stage for comedy or created it outright.

War and the Agricultural Recovery of France," *The Recovery of France in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Peter Shervey Lewis; trans. G. F. Martin (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 23–59.

⁵ I am not engaging in the recent scholarly debate regarding the emergence and redefinition of the medieval village as *encellulement*. See *The Rural History of Medieval European Societies: Trends and Perspectives*, ed. Isabel Alfonso. The Medieval Countryside, 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), and *Autour du "village": établissements humains, finages et communautés rural entre Seine et Rhin*, ed. Jean-Marie Yante and Anne-Marie Bultot-Verleysen (Louvain-la-Neuve: L'Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 2010). As noted above, the villages in any case are works of fiction.

⁶ See Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 1–5.

⁷ There are certainly exceptions: *Pattes-ouaintes* centers around university shenanigans (and, as Bernard Faivre has observed, seems much more like a *sottie* or allegory than a domestic farce). *Ragot, Musarde et Babilie* pits two Parisian washerwomen against a beggar, none faring particularly well except in the rhetorical prowess of their epithets. *Capitaine Mal à Point*, a variant on *franc archer* comic plays (see note 45), has two military braggarts vying with each other in telling stories, and recruiting two destitute cooks as they wage imaginative battles against foodstuffs. For a brief summary of *Pattes-ouaintes*, see Faivre, *Répertoire des farces françaises: des origines à Tabarin* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1993), 328–29; see also Petit de Julleville's *Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au Moyen-Age* (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1886), 206–08. For *Ragot, Musarde et Babilie*, see Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 366–67; for *Capitaine Mal à Point*, see Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 82–83.

⁸ Wilhelm Blankenburg, *Der Vilain in der Schilderung der altfranzösischen Fabliaux* (Greifswald: Druck von J. Abel, 1902); Kathryn Gravdal, *Vilain and Courtis: Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Regents Studies in Medieval Culture (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

⁹ There is also one reference to a relevant poem in the footnotes.

The realities of life *ex urbe* provide great “local color” to the farces of the late-medieval period, giving temporal and material qualifiers to otherwise very universal comedy. Those engaged in semirural or village trades, with all their encoded stereotypes, come before us onstage, whether their work or the fruits of their labor be obvious or absent. These include (but are not limited to)¹⁰ cheating millers, who may in turn be cheated on (*Le meunier de qui le diable emporte l'ame en enfer*, *Le meunier et le gentilhomme*), belligerent fishwives (*L'antechrist et trois femmes*, *Les femmes qui font accroire à leurs maris de vessies que ce sont lanternes*), and crafty and/or ribald itinerant tinkers (*Le chaudronnier*, *Les femmes qui font écurer leurs chaudrons*; *Le chaudronnier, le savetier, et le tavernier*).¹¹ The plays also present a host of shiftless and/or foolish traveling cobblers (*Martin de Cambrai*; *Le savetier Audin*; *Le savetier Calbain*; *Le savetier, le moine, la femme, le portier*; *Le savetier, Marguet, Jaquet, Proserpine*; *Le savetier qui ne répond que chansons*; *Les deux savetiers*), stingy tripe-sellers (*Un aveugle, son valet et une tripière*; *La tripière*), and one quarrelsome milkmaid with no scruples about taking on the law (*Le savetier, le sergent, et la laitière*).¹²

The keeping and selling of chickens seems to have been an especially favorite rural trade depicted in the farces of this period, be it evoked through actual hawking of poultry¹³ (*Le marchand de volaille et les deux voleurs*, *Les femmes qui vendent amourettes en gros et en détail*) or through frantic lovers having recourse to chicken coops in which they must hide from enraged husbands (*Le poulailler à quatre personnages*,¹⁴ *Les deux gentilshommes et le meunier*).¹⁵ The tasks of making wine—and the joys of purchasing and consuming it—are evoked in at least five farces: *Le pourpoint rétréci*, *Pernet qui va au vin*, *Le testament de Pathelin*, *La nourrice et la chambrière*, and *Lourdaud et Tard Habile*.¹⁶

¹⁰ Indeed, it is hard to know what trades to omit from this listing, as most are arguably rural; one could conceivably include also fabricators of skates (*Celui qui garde les patins*, *Le patinier*), a chimneysweep (*Le rammoneur de cheminées*), and a host of village priests, in farces too numerous to number.

¹¹ Again, this list is meant to indicate areas for study; some of these farces will not be analyzed here.

¹² The trade of water-carrier is also acknowledged in one farce (*Le porteur d'eau*), though the trade is frankly incidental to the plot.

¹³ May I be forgiven the pun.

¹⁴ Also known as *Le poulier à quatre personnages*. The more modernized spelling is given in Faivre's *Répertoire* (see note 7), 351–53.

¹⁵ Also known as *Le poulailler à six personnages*, in Faivre's listing (see note 7). The motif of lovers hiding in (or underneath) chicken coops, of course, is hardly an unfamiliar one; see Boccaccio, *Decameron*, V, 10.

¹⁶ As well as in the previously mentioned *Le chaudronnier*, *le savetier*, *et le tavernier*. One might be tempted to include in this list the contributions made by “Le vigneron” in the Roger de Collerye's 1530 allegorical *sottie*, except that the character's speeches focus not on the growing of wine grapes but on the abundant wheat crop and the stinginess of bakers who sell shortened loaves of bread to the hungry masses. See de Collerye, *Satyre pour les habitants d'Auxerre*, in *Recueil général des*

Farm workers going to labor in their fields often give the occasion for all kinds of illicit liaisons in these comic plays. In *Le retrait*, a farce probably in large part derived from the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*,¹⁷ the husband's departure to work "aux champs" provides the opportunity for the wife's lover to be let in by the household servant, Guillot. To be sure, the lover then has to contend with this all-too-clever fool, who nearly scotches the affair by dropping hints of illicit activities to the husband. The latter's sudden appearance back at the house, Guillot slyly suggests, must mean the farmer has tended to his wheat in record time: "Vrayment vos blés sont bien saclés," (L 237; Your wheat must be well weeded indeed!)—an ironic remark guaranteed to tip off the husband.¹⁸ The cuckolded husband in *Le vilain, sa femme et le curé*, a variant of the hilarious *Martin de Cambrai*, comes home from working in the field to dine and returns to his fields to work and nap, in the interval forbidding his scold of a wife to entertain the priest (an interdiction which of course she ignores).¹⁹

It is precisely to secure his wife against this type of extramarital adventure with the local clerical representatives that the laborer husband, in *La femme qui fut dérobée à son mari en sa hotte*,²⁰ resorts to rather extraordinary homespun measures, which of course are still comically thwarted. The farmer, again a kinder if not much gentler version of the cynical husband in *Martin de Cambrai*, urges his wife to accompany him to harvest the fields of hemp,²¹ where, if they want to have an abundant yield from their liberal sowing, "Cultiver le fault de bonne heure" (L 6; It must be reaped early). The wife, if not pregnant, is apparently barefoot, complaining of sore feet to excuse herself from the task: "Il me tient aux jambes et aux piedz" (L 21; "It's got me in the legs and feet"). The husband uses all manner of pleas to persuade her, vowing to buy her a pair of shoes from a huckster, insisting her presence will give him more heart to do his work, promising to bring

sotties, vol. 2, ed. Emile Picot (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot et Cie, 1904), 347–72.

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Le retrait*, in *Recueil de farces, 1450–1550*, ed. André Tissier, vol. I (Genève: Droz, 1986), 179–242. For clarity, hereafter I will refer to this collection using the following format: Tissier, volume (year), pages. For a discussion of *Le retrait*'s relationship to *Nouvelle LXXII* of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, see Tissier, I (1986), 183–89.

¹⁸ It is to be noted that in this play, as with the chicken-coop farces, the outdoor privy is used as a place for the lover to hide, though he most certainly does not escape unmarked from the ordeal.

¹⁹ Graham A. Runnalls, "Une farce inédite: *La farce du vilain, sa femme et le curé*," *Romania* CVI (1985): 456–80.

²⁰ Anonymous, *Farce de la femme qui fut desrobée à son mari en sa hote et mise une pierre en son lieu*, *Recueil de farces françaises inédites du XVe siècle*, ed. Gustave Cohen (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1949), 179–85.

²¹ Hemp was not an uncommon medieval crop, for use as a fibre as well as a food. It is mentioned in Jean-Bruyérin Champier's 1560 treatise *De re cibaria* as a food commonly raised in areas or times when sufficient provisions were lacking. See Madeleine Ferrières, *Sacred Cow, Mad Cow: A History of Food Fears*, trans. Jody Gladding (New York: Columbia, 2006), 142–43 [originally published as *Histoire des peurs alimentaires: Du Moyen âge à l'aube du XXe Siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002)].

a bottle along so they can make merry. And to resolve her chief objection of having to walk, he volunteers to carry her out to the fields . . . in a sack. But there is no escape from mischief: even so accoutered, and so far out in the countryside, the wife is as much a bulls-eye of temptation as her husband is a target of sport. Two ribald clergy members conspire to put a large rock in her place in the sack while they have a romp with the acquiescing wife, convincing the all-too-gullible farmer she has been converted to stone because of his sin of jealousy.²² The irony is palpable: the literal stone he would ordinarily consider merely an obstacle as he plowed his field now weighs him down metaphorically with guilt—until he cries pardon and is reunited with his wife at the play's end.

One of the most masterful of farces that involve workers toiling on the land—in this case, a vineyard—is Pierre Gringoire's 1512 Carnival play *Raoullet Ployart*.²³ Verily, this is one plowman that has no peers.²⁴ Nor would any wish to be, for, according to his exasperated wife, the unfortunate Raoullet has a plow that is no longer what it once was and will not stand up to the task. His wife, claiming that the proper tilling is not being done on the perfectly arable land she has to offer, urges him to hire out his field work to two dandies, Dire and Faire (Words and Deeds); in the face of his reluctance, she undertakes the labor on the sly. The task is accomplished, not surprisingly, by Deeds (whose enthusiasm for the plowing is commented on by the cheeky household servant Mausecret) to the wife's delight and the poor usurped plowman's dismay. The farce, of course, is in fact a bawdy extended play on words about another kind of fertility entirely, though one just as necessary to human existence.²⁵ Still, it comes replete with farm terminology, including, but by no means limited to, the *double-sens* expressions "houe," "besches," "fouller," "jumelles," and "renverser la terre" (hoe, spades, dig,

²² The abundance of philandering priests in the rural farces of this period in France seems to indicate that these were characters plausible enough to be considered standard entertainment. At the very least their presence supports what historians now assert: that rural clergy, far from their absentee stereotypes, were quite vigorous members of the countryside communities they served. See Graeme Small, *Late Medieval France. European History in Perspective* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 88–93.

²³ Tissier, II (1987), 231–85. For a recent study of Gringoire's entire entertainment (comprising four plays), see Alan Hindley, "Pierre Gringoire, Satire and Carnival," *Court and Humour in the French Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Professor Pauline Smith*, ed. Sarah Alyn Stacey (Oxford, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2009), 183–98.

²⁴ Another pun for which I beg forgiveness Despite the shared profession (and the presence of the two allegorical characters/workmen), Gringoire's bawdy play does not seem to be derived in any way from the English narrative poem *Piers Plowman* analyzed in the Introduction to this volume. See also the contribution to this volume by Daniel F. Pigg.

²⁵ For a more detailed study of this genre of dramatized extended metaphor, I refer to my forthcoming study "A Part for Her (W)hole: Metaphorical Abstractions of Male and Female in Late Medieval French Comedy," *Medieval Humour: Laughter, Smiles and Sneers*, ed. Sally Vaughn, Katrin Beyer, and Claudia Esch (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, n.d.).

pressboards, turn over the earth).²⁶ And the play underscores, in its own gleefully offcolor way, the rural necessities of plowing and planting:

Doublette:
 En effect ma terre est en bruit.
 Il ne fault que trouver ouvriers
 Qui y besogent voulentiers
 Et qui aient des besches friandes. (L 76–81)

[Wife:
 In sooth, my field's about to flower
 Let's find some fellow with manpower
 Who's willing, and is not afraid
 To work his firm and frisky spade!²⁷]

There are a number of farces in which the rural setting is key to the comic effect. In *Les trois amoureux de la croix*, it is a secluded cross²⁸ somewhere in the countryside and far from prying eyes that provides the backdrop for a fiendish con game: three friends have unknowingly each made an amorous—and prepaid—assignation there with the selfsame woman, who pleads her suspicious husband will trouble them should they press their suit at her house. The three are scheduled to meet her in a not-too-remote location, “A une croix qui est cy près” (L 119; at a cross near here), and come attired, as their rapacious paramour has requested, in the respective guises of priest, death, and devil. Of course the three confound and terrify each other before discovering they’ve been had.

In like manner, the village fountain from which maidservants would obtain water—as well as flirt and vie for a suitor’s attentions—is the locus of opportunity in the farce *Mince de Quaire*.²⁹ The two young women who meet there are temporarily rivals for the (purchased) affections of Mince, who has a bucket of cold water dashed on his hopes as well as his person when he tries to renege on his deal. In *Les chambrières*, too, the local fountain is where two women servants jockey for place in line, gossip amicably about their masters, and, when incited by the allegorical figure Débat, erupt into a knock-down, drag-out fight (with threats of buckets breaking over heads) until reconciled by a passing Franciscan.³⁰ The

²⁶ Even more copious vineyard-tending terminology is to be found in the decidedly less amusing anonymous poem “Le Débat de la Vigne et du Laboureur,” in which the farmer takes the vine to task for his woes and in turn is given a sound verbal drubbing by the malignant vine, who accuses the workman of stinginess and an overfondness for his end product. See “Le Débat de la Vigne et du Laboureur,” *Recueil de poésies françaises des XVe et XVIe siècles: morales, facétieuses, historiques*, vol. II, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon (Paris: A. Jannet, 1855), 317–24.

²⁷ My unpublished translation is titled *Rowley Plowbender*. Copyright 2011 Sharon D. King.

²⁸ Or crossroads; both are possible readings. See *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 57–66.

²⁹ The name might be translated as “Slim Pickens.” See *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 171–77.

³⁰ Anonymous, *Les chambrières*, *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 413–20.

supposedly dumbstruck (yet still amazingly chatty) wife in the farce *Le grand voyage et pèlerinage de Sainte Caquette* traverses the sylvan countryside with her exasperated husband to find a cure for her alleged muteness at the shrine of her saint.³¹ Yet the wilds are perhaps not all that, as more than once she is desperate to find a secluded place to relieve herself: “Je ne sçay lieu où je m’acroppe, / Tant ay de paour que l’on me voye” (L 181–82; I don’t know where I can squat down / I’m so afraid someone will see me). And the river in which people launder soiled linens is central to the plot, if not actually present onstage, in *Tarabin*, *Tarabas*, et *Tribouille Mesnage*.³² Intending to send their servant Tribouille Mesnage to its banks to do the washing, the disputing husband and wife heap increasingly acrimonious discourse upon each other while piling their dirty laundry (identified with scent-specific stains) higher and higher on the put-upon servant.³³ Disgusted, Tribouille ends up literally throwing in the towel on the whole grubby affair.

Sometimes it is the fruitfulness or simple routines of country life that provides the salient detail around which much of the farce’s comedy turns. The healing touch of herbs, imaginary or otherwise, is alluded to in *Les femmes qui font baster leurs maris aux corneilles*.³⁴ The cuckold-to-be husband Pierre is sent on a fool’s errand—“paistre / Aux champs” (L 72–73; to forage in the fields)—to gather a nonexistent medicinal root in the priest’s garden. To address his wife’s faked malady of toothache, in a faked sympathetic-magical way, the duped husband is assured he must pluck the “dronos” herb from the ground with his teeth. His companion in misery, Dando, likewise discovers that he has been sent out into the countryside (while his wife cuckolds him) quite literally on a wild-goose chase: to watch the flight of birds in order to predict the advent of rain or winds. The not-so-imaginary comforts of bucolic life are heralded in plays such as *Guillaume qui mangea les figes du curé*, in which the meal offered to the priest’s guests is to culminate in a dessert of two perfect fresh figs—until the priest’s *badin* servant Guillaume preemptively raids the fruit basket, not once but twice.³⁵

³¹ Anonymous, *Le grand voyage et pèlerinage de Sainte Caquette*, Tissier, II (1987), 17–72.

³² Anonymous, *Farce à III personnages* (also known as *Tarabin-Tarabas*), *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 95–101. See also Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 411–12.

³³ Few farces exhibit more rhetorically scatological prowess than this one; this may have something to do with what Freedman has noted as the recurring stereotype of peasants being linked with matters of excretion (my aphoristic take on this: “Peasants happen”). A useful reference is the section “Stupidity and Excrement” in Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 150–56, as well as Nicolino Applauso’s study of the satirical, sometimes scatological, yet serious evocation of the peasant in this volume.

³⁴ Anonymous, *Les femmes qui font baster leurs maris aux corneilles*, *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 227–34.

³⁵ Anonymous, *Guillaume qui mangea les figes du curé*, in *Ancien Théâtre François*, vol. I, ed. Viollet le Duc (Paris: P. Jannet, 1854), 328–50. The play’s title contains a naughty play on words, “figes” connoting the male genitalia as well as the female, a kind of all-purpose gendered fruit. See Robert

In the allegorical fragment *Traité plaisant . . . de Figue, Noëz et Chastègne*, the very presence of the three comestibles testifies to the importance of the fertile orchards from whence they come: “Apportées des champs sur tables / Pour substanter le corps humain” (6; Brought from the fields to tables / To nourish the human body).³⁶ They argue their relative status, fig and chestnut boasting that they are a cut above the lowly apples and pears, and pitying the poor walnut, fit only to feed “Pauvres gens” (6; poor folk) who can only afford water to drink.³⁷ Similarly, in the equally fragmentary *Le vilain et son fils Jacob*, the lad who rebels against his father’s wish that he go to school to become a clerk is appeased by the fruits of rural life—literally: he is bribed with “. . . des pommes dedans ton sac. / . . . / Des nois au flac / Et ung gros cartier de fromaige” (8–9; some apples in your sack, walnuts that go crack, and a big wedge of cheese).³⁸ Forthwith he is popped into the aforementioned bag, to be carted off “Tandis que le sac durera” (9; As long as the sack holds up). And in *La farce nouvelle des esbahis* (which is in fact a *sottie*), Dame Justice rather smugly calls attention to the nurturing abundance of crops—enough grain to make cheap bread and sufficient grapes for good wine—which stave off hunger and keep the common people satisfied and content.³⁹ The third fool admits she has a point: “Nous avons ce que nous avons / Les bleds sont beaux et les vins bons” (L 101–02; We do have what we have / The wheat crop’s good, the wine is fine.) Yet at this juncture, the fools all turn on Justice, peppering her with leading questions that demonstrate how absent she has been from the public sphere—beginning with the rampant adulteration of flour in bakeries . . .

Indeed, all is not pure and simple pleasure in these comic plays, no matter how pastoral the setting. The anonymous Swiss text *Janot dans le sac*⁴⁰ has the foolish husband-who-would-be-saint meet the rocky road of rural communities most intimately when he is lured into a sack—a recurring theme in medieval farce⁴¹—with promises of finding Paradise. He finds his way quite a rough one, as

Palter, *The Duchess of Malfi’s Apricots, and Other Literary Fruits* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 147–65.

³⁶ Châtaigne de Toucy, *Traité plaisant . . . de Figue, Noëz et Chastègne*, *Le chasseur bibliographe*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon, 2ème année, no. 4 (Paris: François, Libraire, April 1863), 3–13.

³⁷ In the second part of the fragment, they relate themselves to benefices; the third section is missing.

³⁸ Anonymous, “L’enfant mis aux écoles,” *Le chasseur bibliographe*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon (Paris: François, Libraire, Sept. 1862), 5–9. The play is listed in Faivre’s *Répertoire* (see note 7) as *Le vilain et son fils Jacob*.

³⁹ Anonymous, *La farce nouvelle des esbahis*, *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 21–25.

⁴⁰ The old text was the anonymous *Farce à cinq personnages*, ed. Paul Aebischer, *Trois farces françaises inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1924), 13–29. The new edition is titled *La farce de Janot dans le sac*, ed. Marie-Claire Gérard-Zai and Simone de Reyff. *Textes littéraires français*, 388 (Genève: Droz, 1990).

⁴¹ This motif may be found, in addition to the plays mentioned here (i.e. *Janot dans le sac*; *Le vilain . . . ; La femme qui fut desrobée . . . ; Le savetier, le sergent, et la laitière*, and *Cautelleux, Barat et le vilain*),

he is dragged over and bumped against stones and pebbles: "Qui dyable a mis cy ce chilliout?" (L 230; Who the devil put that stone there?). Of course such indignities, as well as that of having his "cul escorché" (L 209; bum skinned) all amount to a ruse by the conniving wife and her lover to play a humiliating prank on him.

In Eustache Deschamps's *Farce de Mestre Trubert et d'Antrongnart*, a wily peasant outsmarts an avaricious attorney (taking him to the cleaners in a medieval version of strip craps) whom the peasant had engaged to bring a thief to justice. The thief's crime around which this oneupmanship revolves seems petty in the extreme: his stealing a single almond from the peasant's garden, about which the peasant waxes indignant indeed: "... c'est un degré / De larrecin et de mesfait" (L 24–25, it's an issue / of theft and malfeasance).⁴² The larger issue of rural life involves the citified lawyer, who claims he has happily represented "... ducs, contes, chevaliers" (L 227; dukes, counts, knights) and who is yet beaten quite handily by the rustic farmer, who makes sure the judges he chooses (his allegorically-tinged friends Barat, Hasart and Feintise) queue up on his side in their final assessment.

In some farces, the comic element lies primarily within their imaginatively evoked rural characters. It is useful to note that these categories often overlap, as they certainly do in the last play cited. Who can forget the crafty shepherd in the quintessentially metatheatrical *Pathelin*, who learns only too well from the master con-man how to bleat innocently before the judge in order to win his case (the story put forth by lawyer Pathelin is that the poor simpleton thinks he is out in the fields watching his sheep)? Of course the *rusé* shepherd then outwits Pathelin by reprising his role when the attorney's fee comes due. Salient details that bespeak rural hardships with some basis in the historical record emerge in the *berger's* account of tending sheep: having kept the flocks for years, and yet been ill-paid and poorly clothed, the shepherd admits to Pathelin he has bumped off and consumed not a few of the sheep in his keeping, passing them off as diseased: "Et puy je luy faisoyz entendre, / ... / Que'[ilz] mouroient de la clavelée" (L 1052–54; And then I explained to him / ... / That they died of sheep-pox).⁴³ Pathelin's

in *Rejouï d'amours*, and in two "Tabarinic" farces, *Les deux pourceaulx* and *Le voyage aux Indes* (see Faivre, *Répertoire* [see note 7], 443–45). One can also see the motif operating in the "content"-laden sack of *Le meunier de qui le diable porte l'âme en enfer*.

⁴² *La farce de Mestre Trubert et d'Antrongnart* in Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. VII, ed. Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot et Cie, 1891), 155–74.

⁴³ *Maître Pathelin*, the play with its extensive annotations comprising the whole of Tissier, VII (1993). The volume presents two annotated versions of the text; I am referring to the topmost, Texte I. The *clavelée*, or sheep-pox, was a terrible plague of livestock referenced by other writers in the early modern period, such as Rabelais. See *British Medical Journal*, July–Dec. 1863, vol. 2, ed. William O. Markham (London: Honeyman for BMJ, 1863), 142–50. For a discussion of the *clavelée* in context of other diseases, see Ferrières, *Sacred Cow, Mad Cow*, 17.

character pulls off his manipulation a bit better in the sequel farce *Le nouveau Pathelin*: the cunning trickster convinces a gullible village merchant who sells locally-obtained furs⁴⁴ that a priest owes him money and persuades the same priest that the hapless merchant wishes to make confession. Pathelin leaves the two to increasing miscommunication—and comedy—while he absconds with the pelts.

Other kinds of characters from the countryside abound in these plays, both confirming and breaking stereotypes: stalwart and outspoken farmers, guileless produce vendors, brazen and quarrelsome dairymaids. In *Colin, fils de Thévot le maire*, a sturdy peasant woman who raises cows, chickens and geese on her hemp farm indignantly brings the theft of a rooster, her best laying hen, some goslings, and two fresh cheeses before the local magistrate—the mayor—and repeatedly demands justice for her losses.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, said mayor is also father of the chicken thief—a *franc archer manqué* recently returned from the war with the prize of a pilgrim mistakenly taken as prisoner.⁴⁶ The outraged woman confronts the cowardly young man before his indulgent papa, repeatedly identifying the culprit and further accusing him of ravaging her *jardin potager*, as she witnessed him allowing “sa jument paistre / En mon jardin” (L 47–48, his mare to graze / in my garden). Blood being thicker than chicken fat, of course, the aggrieved scold gets no satisfaction, even after attempting to bribe Thévot with farm-fresh apples and cheese.

Another farce, *Le marchand de pommes*, offers food for comedy via a cheerful, if scatterbrained, apple and egg seller,⁴⁷ who, though stone-deaf, enters the stage singing and muses about his quandary: “. . . porterai ge / Mes eux & mes pommes ensemble?” (3; should I bring both my eggs and my apples together [to sell]?) Once at the marketplace, he speaks of his country-grown produce with real pride; his apples “. . . sont plus douces que miel” (p. 8; are sweeter than honey). Yet his affliction makes it comically impossible for him to field a single question

⁴⁴ The text mentions squirrel fur (“quarreaux de gris”) and rabbit fur (“d’aumure”) that will be used to line clothing. *Le nouveau Pathelin*, Tissier, VIII (1994), 17–123. See especially L 219–245.

⁴⁵ *Colin, fils de Thévot le maire*, in Tissier, V (1989), 163–228. It is also known as *Thévot qui vient de Naples et amaine un turc prisonnier* (*Recueil*, ed. Cohen [see note 20], 35–41).

⁴⁶ It was a stereotype of the wandering rogues known as *franc archiers*, of which there are numerous monologues and farces, to boast of stealing all kinds of domesticated animals—especially chickens—from the farms and countryside they passed through. See Sharon D. King, “Gasping At Straw Men: The Politics of Fear in Early Modern French Farce,” *Viator* 32 (2001), ed. Blair Sullivan (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001), 229–44. There are other texts dealing with the same issue not mentioned in the study, including another nearly whole Thévot play (*Thévot le maire, Perruche, sa femme, et Colin leur fils*) as well as the farce *L’aventureux, Guermouset, Guillot, et Rignot*. For a brief discussion of these texts, see Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 54–55, 415–18.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Le Marchant de pommes et d’eulx, l’Apoincteur, le Sergent et deulx Femmes*, in *Recueil de farces, moralités et sermons joyeux*, vol. IV, ed. Le Roux de Lincy and Francisque Michel (Paris: Techener, 1837), no. 70.

accurately about his merchandise, and he unwittingly causes a fight to break out between two housewives (with the market attendant having to summon of the local authorities). His is a variant of the eternally baffled character, deaf or otherwise distracted, who misinterprets at every turn.⁴⁸

And, as in *Janot dans le sac*, some rustic characters display a mean streak. In the farce *Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière*, a maladroit country milkmaid's increasingly acerbic verbal altercation with the village cobbler, whom she has inadvertently splashed with the milk she carries on her head, turns dark—literally.⁴⁹ The sergeant who attempts to make peace between them only succeeds in uniting the two against him, and gets a pot of pitch dumped over his head as his thanks, as well as being in short order stuffed into a sack, subjected to a vigorous trouncing—"Danssons sur le sac ung petit," the cobbler suggests (L 422; Let's dance on the sack a bit)—and finally tossed into a latrine pit.

Several farces compare rural characters to the draught animals typical of the agrarian world of this era, and unsurprisingly, none fare well in the juxtaposition.⁵⁰ Donkeys seem to have been a favored onstage comparison.⁵¹ In *Le pont aux ânes*, a wife's contrariness and obstinacy is compared to the proverbial stubbornness of donkeys: the husband is counseled by the italianate faux-sage Messire Dominé Dé to go to the Asses' Bridge, where he will find the solution to her refusal to obey him.⁵² Once there, he sees a woodcutter urging his reluctant jenny to pass over the bridge, bribing her with promises of good pasture and cursing her with sheep-pox as she refuses to budge. Finally the woodcutter resorts to the obvious, if hardly humane solution: "Puis que j'ay ce baston de houx, / Je vous froteray les costez" (L 217–18; Since I have this holly stick, / I will beat you on all sides). Farce being a staunch supporter of the status quo, the husband

⁴⁸ In the twentieth century, a variant of this character could be found in the film *See No Evil, Hear No Evil*, directed by Arthur Hiller (1989), with the deaf character played by Gene Wilder.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, *Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière*, Tissier, VIII (1994), 211–74. The sergeant's ultimate condition would seem to conform to the stereotype of the villain being associated both with dirt and excrement; see note 33.

⁵⁰ Assimilating peasants to animals was a common stereotype of the Middle Ages. See Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 1–2, 134–35.

⁵¹ Any comparison to donkeys would probably have been seen as rather over-the-top. Bartholomaeus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman)'s *De proprietatibus rerum*, which, as Albrecht Classen states in the Introduction to this volume, was a standard reference work of natural history in the Middle Ages (translated into French in 1322), describes asses as the lowest of the low, "dull, and witless and forgetful," to be pitied even by the most wretched *vilain*. See Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 358. Such an extreme comparison would no doubt have added not a little to the humor of the plays.

⁵² Anonymous, *Le pont aux ânes*, Tissier, VI (1990), 63–111. The reputation of donkeys to be obstinate, from whence came the expression found in the play's title, is briefly discussed in the headnote to the play, 70–75.

predictably returns home and uses this misogynistic solution to good result—for him, though hardly for his wife.⁵³

In *Cautelleux, Barat et le villain*, two miscreants conspire to steal a very dimwitted peasant's prized donkey, of which he is inordinately fond: "Avant, Baudet tout bellement, / Dieu te gart de mal, je l'en prie" (L 49–50; Go ahead, donkey, gently, gently, / God keep you from harm, I pray) the peasant coaxes the creature.⁵⁴ While the peasant is at the marketplace; the first rogue slips the bridle around his own neck and pretends to be the creature, restored to his human form after serving a sentence of seven years in Purgatory in the form of an ass. The two promptly make one of the peasant by milking him of charity money as well.

In another play the comparison is less expected, if just as amusing: *Jeninot qui fit un roi de son chat* opens with a middle-class couple from Paris, perhaps too upwardly mobile for their own good, hiring a simpleton *badin* from the country as servant.⁵⁵ Among the many bunglings he makes of his orders, Jeninot parses the husband's instruction to "Gentiment mener ta maistresse / A la grand messe à Nostre Dame" (L 272–73; gently lead your mistress / to the high mass at Notre Dame) as a request to drive the wife somewhere as one would a donkey. Jeninot is confused: "Elle n'a bride ni licol, / Comment voulez-vous que (je) la maine?" (L 276–77; She has neither bridle nor harness, how should I lead her?). But the foolish lad gamely jumps on the woman's back, yelling the requisite "Hay, hay dia" (285) one would use to urge on a headstrong creature, and of course is bewildered when he is beaten for what he believes was simply following orders.

At least two farces take the assimilation of rural man with his livestock even further, with results both comical and pathetic. In *Le fol, le mari, la femme et le curé*, the prologue announces the motif straight away: he will speak of "... ces bones fames / Qui font leurs maris sanbler anes" (L 36–37; these good wives / Who make

⁵³ As Tissier notes, a primary source for this story is Boccaccio's *Decameron*, IX, 9, in which the husband, seeking from the wisdom of Solomon a way to deal with his wife's stubbornness, is sent to Goosebridge and there discovers a similar example to follow. See Tissier, VI, 69–75. An excellent essay that analyzes this tale from a feminist perspective is Louise O. Vasvári, "'Buon cavallo e mal cavallo vuole sprone, e buona femina e mala femina vuol Bastone': Medieval Cultural Fictions of Wife-Battering," *Discourse on Love, Marriage, and Transgression in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 278, ed. (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 313–36.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Cautelleux, Barat et le villain*, *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 87–93. The peasant's solicitude for the creature indicates a kind of brotherly affinity for donkeys (again indicating his low status), which is borne out in his falling for every line the scoundrels feed him.

⁵⁵ Anonymous, *Jeninot qui fit un roi de son chat*, Tissier, V (1989), 17–58. This play is a good example of the stereotypical comic subgenre, found as equally throughout farce as it is in modern sitcoms: the overly refined denizens of the city tangling with (supposedly) ignorant country folk. Here it is the rustic character that makes fools out of his presumed superiors.

their husbands seem like asses).⁵⁶ Martin, a lazy (indeed, seemingly narcoleptic) farm worker has a scold for a wife, Mallensenhée, who, perhaps unsurprisingly, has been canoodling with the local priest. The two lovers, finding the husband once again asleep in the field he should be working,⁵⁷ make him the figure of great sport by tying asses' ears and a tail on him, leading him to believe he has truly metamorphosed, Midas-like, into a donkey: "Suis je donc devenu ane? / . . . / Je ay la cue et les aurelhes" (L 176, 178; So have I turned into an ass? / . . . / I have an ass's tail and ears). Making lemonade out of this lemony deception, his wife offers Martin hay and hitches him to a cart to take wheat to the mill, which he resignedly pulls.⁵⁸ Similarly, in the farce *George le veau*, the harried if admittedly featherbrained peasant husband George, who has legitimate if fruitless questions as to his ancestry, is led to believe (by the conniving priest and his own wife) that he has been turned into a calf, one that is decidedly not golden.⁵⁹ Forcibly clad in leather by the two conspirators, George acknowledges he must henceforth obey the commands of his spouse.

Both plays do rhetorical *basse-danses* around the concept of being made a "beste," in both the sense of "beast" and "stupid." In the first play, the wife, lamenting her man's lackadaisical work in the garden, remarks: "Encore deviendrés vos beste!" (L 75; You're becoming stupid again), and later ". . . je vos feray sanbler beste," (L 162; I will make you seem like a beast). In *George*, the husband queries the priest point-blank: "Pensez-vous que soys une beste?" (L 82; Do you think I am a [stupid] beast?), a word repeated by the priest as indicative of poor George.⁶⁰ And for good

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Le fol, le mari, la fame, et le curé*, "Moralité et farces des manuscrits Laurenziana-Ashburnham, no. 115 et 116," ed. Paul Aebischer, *Archivum romanicum* XIII (1929): 501–13. In the prologue to this play, there is also an intriguing mention of an invasion of "langostes" coming down from Avignon to Marseilles; though it is highly unlikely that this is an accurate piece of rural medieval reportage, one does wonder what presumably environmental factors might have precipitated such a swarm.

⁵⁷ Aebischer notes, with some reluctance, that this probably has echoes of the kind of "labor" made explicit in Gringoire's play *Raoullet Ployart* (Aebischer, *Archivum romanicum*, [see note 56], 502).

⁵⁸ This is reminiscent of the proverbial tale of the man who thought he was a chicken, a situation for which the wife found the upside: it was indeed a pity, she was wont to say, but they certainly had use for the eggs. A similar metamorphosis, though in terms of "real" fantasy, occurs in Shakespeare's century-later comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which the mischievous Puck turns the poor weaver Bottom's head into a donkey's, which absurdly arouses Queen Titania's passion. The comic acceptance of a human's transformation into animal, whether in form or simply in function, continues to delight in another, much later kind of Western comedy, the sitcom. In *The Simpsons* "Treehouse of Horror XI" mini-episode "Scary Tales Can Come True" (a twisted retelling of Hansel and Gretel) the transformed Homer-Hen at the end provides enormous eggs, ensuring that his family "will never go hungry."

⁵⁹ Anonymous, *George le veau*, Tissier, XI (1997), 61–113.

⁶⁰ I note in passing that this play contains an instance of the phrase "Let George do it" (L 196, "Or ça, ça, laissez faire à George") that according to H. L. Mencken (in *The American Language: A Preliminary Inquiry Into the Development of English in the United States* [New York: A. A. Knopf,

reason: in this play, George constructs his identity by comparing and contrasting himself with other animals. He sees himself “net comme ung oeuf de poulle” (L 221; as clean as a hen’s egg) but not descended from the monarchy, whom he misidentifies as having “les crapaulx / En [les] armes. . .” (L. 224–25; toads / On [the] coat of arms). He may be a “filz de vache” (L 380; son of a cow), but not one “d’oyson ne d’oye” (L 375; of a gosling or a goose). As a “veau de disme,” (L 391) a tithing or “fatted calf” — a medieval metaphor for an idiot — George is likened to the beasts of burden he himself had kept to pay that owed to the church: “A ton curé la disme rendre / De ton bestial” (L 304–05; To your priest [you must] pay the tithe / On your livestock). At the play’s end, he is urged to go on all fours and even moos in abject acceptance of his new-found character.⁶¹ As scholars have noted, this rather complex comedy bears almost postmodern hallmarks of identity confusion.⁶²

There are still other farces that juxtapose presumed genteel, gentrified, or (more) upper-class characters with those of peasants or villagers, to humorous ends. At least five plays present clueless country bumpkins who attempt to match wits with conniving city or town swindlers, with predictably comic results. *Trois Galants et Phlipot* involves one of the three citified dandies spoofing God’s voice in a church so as to fool the village idiot Phlipot, for whom the trio have utter disdain.⁶³ The gallant promises the credulous and bedazzled Phlipot mastery of any profession he chooses, even though he is presently “en l’estat d’ignorance [sic]” (L 69, in a state of ignorance).⁶⁴ The three take on several artful disguises — shoemakers, soldiers, and finally enemy soldiers — to further dupe the poor *badin*, who becomes so overcome with harsh orders, fast changes, and bodily insults that he longs for his simple village life: “. . . maintenant j l’entens; / Mais aux villages ont bon temps / Et gros honneur et gros credit” (L 465–66; now I understand / In villages there are good times / and great honor and credit).

In *Arquemination* an even more dunderheaded villager is sent to town by his wife to sell eggs and cheese in order to “make money” for shoes, which he is hard put

1919]; here I consulted the online version: <http://www.bartleby.com/185/52.html>; before fn. 11) originated in fifteenth-century France and was to enjoy a renaissance of sorts in the U.S. in the early-mid twentieth century. I have as yet not been able to confirm a French source for this phrase other than this one, however.

⁶¹ This stands in contrast to the deliberate and cynical bleats of the shepherd in *Pathelin*, done as a ruse to outfox the master trickster.

⁶² See the discussion in the headnote of *George le veau*, 63–66, 69–74; see also Giovanna Angeli, “Persuasion absurde et manque d’identité dans le théâtre comique de la fin du moyen âge,” *La langue, le texte, et le jeu, Le Moyen Français*, no. 19 (Montréal: CERES, 1986), 1–17.

⁶³ Anonymous, *Trois Galants et Phlipot*, Tissier, II (1987), 289–361. The term “galant” indicated someone who paid more court to women than to a king, but also was a kind of stereotypical “chevalier d’aventure” (Tissier, II, 293).

⁶⁴ As opposed to, say, a state of grace.

to understand. There he encounters two pages who see in him a rich opportunity for sport: “Monstrer luy fault un tour de page / Pour luy apprendre un peu sa court” (L 117–18; We should teach him a page’s trick / So he will learn how things are done).⁶⁵ Appealing to his greed as well as manipulating his gullible nature, they urge him to become an alchemist and turn his base materials into pieces of silver, using his own head to beat them together. Inanity—and incidentally the filling for a fine cheese tart—ensues.⁶⁶

Similarly, the stubborn, lazy, chatty field laborer Colinet in the farce *La femme, le badin et deux voisins*⁶⁷ knows little more than the pigs on his farm—indeed, his first appearance onstage involves him relieving himself—but he does know he wants more than “pain bis et des chataignes” (7; dark bread and chestnuts) for dinner. Indeed, his whole soul—that is to say, his stomach—cries out for bacon: “Du lart . . . la ventre m’en sue” (10; Bacon . . . my belly is sweating for it). Impassive to the pleas of his wife, who offers instead a fine red hen, he sets out for the city to sell sugar-peas to get salt, a sense of the time involved to cure bacon evidently not one of his gifts. Once there he is waylaid and bamboozled by two clever *citoyens* looking for sport. They set about bargaining for the peas, claiming to be from out of town (Rouen), and offering to pay him tomorrow for peas today. Too late Colin wises up to their ploy. But there is a call-back to the joke: the fanciful Biblical name of Zorobabel used by the chief con-man crops up in the priest’s reading at the mass he attends to cleanse his soul of (their) iniquity. Convinced that he has found “l’homme à mes poys” (27, the man with my peas), Colin in desperation even tries to bribe the bewildered priest with his farm’s products (wine, wheat, oats, milk, cheese, and eggs) to get lopsided repayment for his lost peas.

Finally, in the bustling, chaotic *Farce des femmes qui vendent amourettes en gros et en détail*, the dimwitted lad from the backwoods, Villoire (which the text itself calls *sotereau de villaige*, the village idiot), is astounded at the city’s grandeur on his first trip to the Paris marketplace, where he has come to sell his roosters⁶⁸:

⁶⁵ Anonymous, *Farce nouvelle de arquemination*, ed. Émile Picot (Paris: Henri Leclerc, 1914), extrait of *Bulletin du bibliophile*. Online, Hathi Trust Digital Library, at: <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030862901> (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011). The last phrase is somewhat of a pun: the term “apprendre sa court” meant learn how a courtier behaves, his manner and style, etc., but here it also seems to mean learn what mischief courtiers make. The term “tour de page” was (by the seventeenth century at least) a way of saying a dirty trick (c.f. *Dictionnaires d’autrefois*).

⁶⁶ Echoing a theme we have seen before, the wife likens his stupidity to that of donkeys, calling him “un âne parfait” (L 394).

⁶⁷ Anonymous, *La femme, le badin et deux voisins, Recueil de farces, moralités* (see note 47), vol. III, no. 50. In Faivre’s *Répertoire* (see note 7), it is listed under the title *L’homme à mes pois*.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, *Farce des femmes qui vendent amourettes en gros et en détail, Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 295–301.

Qu'il fait beau en si gros villaige,
 Que Paris! C'est ung trèsbeau lieu!
 Qu'il y a de chevaulx, mon dieu,
 Et aussi de gens par les rues!
 Haro! que les maisons sont drues!
 A! il y en a plus de mille!

(L 296–301)

[It's so beautiful in such a big village
 As Paris is! It's a lovely place!
 My God, how many horses there are,
 As well as crowds of people in the streets!
 Whoa there! How thick the houses grow!
 There's got to be more than a thousand of them!]

Ultimately, Villoire's trip proves unfruitful; his attempts to purchase what the women are selling are rebuffed most forcefully, and he must chase after his escaped chickens: "Et si ay perdu mes cochetz" (L 350; and now I've lost my roosters).

Perhaps nowhere is the trope of city slickers taking on—but besting only temporarily—country innocents more pointed than in the farce of *Mahuet badin, natif de Bagnolet, qui va à Paris au marché*.⁶⁹ An enterprising rural *bonne femme* from the village of Bagnolet sends son Mahuet to Paris to sell her farm-fresh eggs and cream. This *badin niais* of the first water⁷⁰ seems terrified of leaving his familiar surroundings to venture to the city, with its alien-appearing crenellated walls surrounding it: "Sont-ilz fais de formages durs?" (L 80; Are they made from hard cheese?). He is further astonished by all the hustle and bustle: "Sainte sang bieu, que de gens! / Beau sire Dieu, que de carneaux!" (L 82–83, Holy damn blood, what a crowd! Good lord God, what crenellations!), and quite perplexed as to the realities of city life: "Où mene-on paistre pourceaux? / Il n'y a herbe ne verdure" (L 84–85; Where does one send pigs to pasture? / There is neither grass nor greenery).⁷¹ Mahuet falls prey to two savvy Parisian con-artists who prey on his

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *Mahuet, badin, natif de Bagnolet, qui va à Paris au marché*, Tissier, X (1996), 119–81. There are two versions on facing pages; for my references I use the longer version that is found on the right.

⁷⁰ An excellent text delineating this theatrical character in all his many variants in the late-medieval / early-modern periods is to be found in Charles Mazouer, *Le personnage du naïf dans le théâtre comique du moyen âge à Marivaux*. Bibliothèque française et romane. Série C: Études littéraires, 76 (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1979).

⁷¹ The vigorous, prosperous cityscape of Paris—walls, crenellations, crowds, the lack of a common green—is thus evoked in a few quick phrases that set the stage for the contrast with the backwoods simpleton. A complementary study of the artistic depiction of cityscapes of roughly this same era may be found in Peter Ainsworth's essay "A Passion for Townscape: Depictions of the City in a Burgundian Manuscript of Froissart's *Chroniques*," *Regions and Landscapes: Reality and*

literalism: his mother's admonition to sell only to "le prix du marché" (L 88; the market price), which he takes to be a person. The woman partner of the conniving pair, in the lingo, "saw him coming": "C'est d'ung soterel / Que j'ay trouvé parmy la halle," (L 125–26, He's a little fool / That I found in the middle of the marketplace). Her sharper partner Gaulthier confirms that Mahuet seems an easy mark: "Bien semble sot, par ma foy," (L 137; He's a fool, all right, in faith). They poke fun at Mahuet throughout their interaction with him, blackening his face while pretending to clean it, even having the gall to tell themselves that their caper is an act of charity:

Car on peut bien sans villenie
A ung fol remonstrer sa follye
Pour l'adviser une autre fois.
C'est aumosne.

(L 175–78)

[For one may, with no baseness
Point out his folly to a fool
So that he may take heed another time.
It's charity.]

In the end, however, Mahuet manages to recover some of his dignity, if not his produce. Gaulthier, who had pretended to be the "market price" and obtained the eggs for free, suggests Mahuet remove the cream pot stuck on his hand by striking it against the first person he meets; Mahuet, true to form, takes him at his word, turns and conks Gaulthier smartly on the head. "Saint Mor, les trompeurs sont trompez," (L 233; By Saint Maurus, the tricksters are outsmarted), his female partner concedes. The play's conclusion proffers another time-honored motif in comical guise: that of the urban experience that transforms the person from the provinces. Mahuet, whose soot-caked face renders him unrecognizable by his terrified mother upon his return, believes he has been changed—literally—by his sojourn in Paris: "Je voy bien donques / Qu'on m'a changé à Paris" (L 279–80; So I now see / That I have been exchanged in Paris). He concludes he must return to Paris so he may try to find himself on the morrow.⁷²

The contrast between life in the countryside and that outside it, be it within city walls or ivory towers, is comic fodder for two other farces. The weakly-plotted dialogue-cum-farce *Les Enfants de Borgneux* has the sharp-witted if craven peasants Thibaut and Guillot weighing, in unabashedly explicit terms, the pluses and

Imagination in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ed. Peter Ainsworth and Tom Scott (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 69–111.

⁷² The blackening might suggest a time-honored motif of the *vilain* as dirty or dark-skinned, except that here it is uncharacteristic and alienating, causing confusion and consternation to his mother. See Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 139–50.

minuses of city girls who are “si palles au visage” (L 283; so pale in the face) and their campestrial sisters who are “aussi belles soubz les draps” (L 285; also pretty under the sheets).⁷³ The cynical pair concludes that “la ville put” (L 305; the city stinks) and that the only pleasure to be found lies “aux champs avec ses filletes” (L 304; in the open field with its [country] girls), and make haste to the countryside.

Much more dramatically engaging is *Maistre Mimin étudiant*, which presents, as one critic has noted, several lively scenes of country living as it lampoons the pretensions of scholarly learning.⁷⁴ Mimin, a simple village lad (truly simple, being a *badin*-character) is sent to school to study to become a clerk, but learns his Latin lessons so well he is said to have forgotten how to speak French. Like the transformed Mahuet, he is alienated by his contact with existence outside his rural sphere, his speech said to be no more comprehensible “qu’un Angloys” (L 15; of an Englishman). His parents at his family farm, especially his dynamo of a mother, just returned breathlessly from the village ovens with the latest gossip, set out to bring him home and re-educate him so that he will be able to marry and have a family, as he is expected to do.⁷⁵ At the school, Mimin’s pompous Magister reveals himself fit only to wear the dunce-cap, having taught his willing pupil nothing but gibberish-Latin. So deluded is the teacher that he believes (or at least says that he believes) Mimin will rival all the clerks in Rome, Paris, or Pavia. After attempting to coax Mimin into speaking French—using his fiancée as bait⁷⁶—the mother succeeds in restoring her son’s native tongue by putting Mimin’s head in a cage and forcing him to repeat her words like a talking bird. The problem resolved, the family heads back to the country and to the prospect of a goose fresh from the barnyard, roasted to celebrate the prodigal son’s return.

Numerous farces contrast rural innocents with predatory nobility, both small and large. In *Le curia*,⁷⁷ the power inequities of early modern male-female relations—the faithful wife is at the mercy both of her husband’s ignorance as well as the *seigneur*’s lechery—as well as of the *champart* system of farming, are briefly exposed and explored for their comic potential, though the end result seems more

⁷³ Anonymous, *Farce des enfans de Borgneux, Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 211–17. Faivre’s *Répertoire* (see note 7) has it as *Enfants de Bagneux*.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, *Maistre Mimin étudiant*, Tissier, III (1988), 215–72.

⁷⁵ And thus, as Tissier notes, conforming to the laws of nature. The necessity for sex and reproduction is comically emphasized in this play, with the mother gushing over her son’s “tool” and Mimin murmuring salacious pseudo-Latin-laden inanities in his fiancée’s ear.

⁷⁶ Tissier points out that the young woman is still toting her doll, yet is evidently in charge of the kitchen, as she is boiling milk when her future in-laws come to call. See *Mimin*, L 57–112.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, *Joyeuse farce à trois personnes*, though listed as *Le curia* in Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 126–27. The text of the play online, can be found found at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8619699t.r=.langES> (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011).

poignant than humorous.⁷⁸ Indeed, the sexually adventurous wife, a frequently-encountered character in farces, stands in marked contrast to the would-be fidelity of this play's wife (and brand-new mother), who has caught the eye of their local overlord ("le curia," or in modern French, "le curial").⁷⁹ The overlord offers to lease out his fertile lands to be labored by the peasant cobbler Pierrou, who has lost the wealth of his farm and its livestock to marauding soldiers.⁸⁰ The curial, cynically reasoning that he can hire the peasant to gain access to the young woman—"D'une pierre je foy deux cou" (9; with one stone I will hit two times)—contrives to have the former widower, desperate to do anything to satisfy his new landlord, assist in seducing his own wife. Taking advantage of Pierrou's naiveté, the lord asks the wife to lend him her "gaffry" (in modern French "gaufrier") or waffle iron, an implement which evidently once carried a more complex signification code than it does at present.⁸¹

Somewhat lost in the *de rigueur* analysis of the mean trick played on the couple are the intriguing details of farming that slip into this play. The peasant waxes eloquent as he anticipates choosing the four oxen he will need (as well as a replacement yoke) to work the curial's land, calling them by name. He is equally enthusiastic about the crops he will sow, using a form of rotation: in the one field (also named specifically; the curial admits the peasant knows his lands well) that was sown with fava beans, he will sow turnips⁸² and grains.⁸³ Pierrou frets about

⁷⁸ Again, I do not suggest that the play gives an accurate representation of *métayage*, but it is reasonable to assume that the system, and its easy abuse by an unscrupulous person in a position of power, were societal givens that could be easily understood by audiences in the locality of Lyon in the late sixteenth century. A useful study of the systems of hiring out land to be worked in Western Europe is *Les revenus de la terre: complant, champart, métayage en Europe occidentale, IX–XVIII siècles* (Auch : Dépcot et Diffusion, Comité départemental du tourisme du Gers, 1987). See also Small, *Late Medieval France* (see note 22), 60–64.

⁷⁹ The text, published in Lyon in 1595—and thus much later than the other texts in this study—offers an intimate glimpse of the difference of peasant dialect (here, Savoyard) vis-à-vis the more Frenchified speech of the middle or upper classes in Savoy, as well as details of "des moments de la vie rurale." See Gaston Tuaillon, *La littérature en francoprovençal* (Grenoble: ELLUG, Université Stendhal, 2001), 98–107.

⁸⁰ Savoy was a hotly contested area in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. See Tuaillon, *La littérature*, 92–94.

⁸¹ I refer again to my forthcoming essay on the genre of comedic extended metaphor; see note 25. It takes a bit of an imaginative stretch to relate the double-sided medieval waffle-iron, rectangular or oval in shape, filled with batter (to make cookies, not breakfast pastries) and placed over a fire to bake, to the female sexual organs. A useful visual resource is an antique *gaufrier* found online, at http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moule_%C3%A0_gaufres (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011).

⁸² The term he uses is "raves," also known as turnip mustard (*brassica rapa*). According to at least one medieval text on plants and their relation to human health, they were useful in promoting virility in the carnal act. They also needed to be cooked twice. Turnips were considered quintessential fare for poor folk. See Carmélia Opsomer, *L'art de vivre en santé: images et recette du moyen âge. Le Tacuinum sanitatis (manuscrit 1041) de la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Liège* (Alleur, Belgium:

fees to cover the livestock's equipment: "Qui payera lou forgeajou" (p. 7; who will pay the blacksmith?) and dickers with his new landlord over having a milch-cow and dividing the milk, butter and cheese the cow will be producing, following her calving in a fortnight (for which, like any good farmer, he shows not a little anxiety). He even anticipates the oxen and cow's need for a salt-lick several times a year: "Y fau bin assala la vachy / Et lou Bou . . ." (p. 8; And you must give a good measure of salt to the cow / And the cattle . . .). Later, after the waffle-iron has been lent, howsoever unwillingly, Pierrou returns home, beseeching his wife to provide the homely comforts of a peasant's table: cooked turnips and a dish of hot soup (p. 14). When he finally grasps the meaning of the sad expression on her face,⁸⁴ the incensed Pierrou vows to pursue the curial, armed to the teeth with sword, halberd, and, both tellingly and comically, a tool of his trade: a *tranche-ferranche*, a kind of hoe. He is dissuaded by his resigned wife from making their situation worse, but has only harsh words for her at the end, as he contemplates how he has been made a laughingstock.

Other farces placing the nobility in opposition to the lower classes have the last comically emerging first, or at least coming out even.⁸⁵ In *Le meunier et le gentilhomme*, the miller is depicted as the quintessential medieval village crook.⁸⁶

Editions du Perron, 1991), 72.

⁸³ The blacksmith calls them "granne balle," grains which have been producing consistently, and which he opines will maintain such a good yield. An excellent study of medieval methods and manners of raising crops in general, and the practice of rotating crops in particular, may be found in Samuel Leturcq, *La vie rurale en France au Moyen Age, Xe–XVe siècle*. Collection Cursus. Série Histoire Cursus (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004). A thirteenth-century record of three-kinds crop rotation (two different kinds of cereals, then fallow earth) in the parish of St.-Martin de Tournai gives us an example of how this worked in another area of France, though it is of limited use, being a record dating from three centuries earlier than the farce. See Giovanni Cherubini, *Agricoltura e società rurale nel Medioevo: montecoronaro dalla signoria dell'abbazia del Trivio al dominio di Firenze*. Biblioteca storica toscana, 15 (Florence: Olschki: 1972), 95–96.

⁸⁴ He likens it to that of Renard who has lost his tail, from the medieval beast-fable popular with rural and urban audiences alike.

⁸⁵ The rather flat farce of *Le Gentilhomme et son page* has the two antagonist characters as much dialoguing with the audience as harassing each other; the false boasts of the miserable nobleman are undercut at every turn by the snide comments of his servant. But the page is not clearly a rural character, which actually often proves to be the case in rural settings within late-medieval literature. See *Farce joyeuse à deux personnages, Recueil de farces, moralités* (see note 47), vol. I, no. 8. In Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Der Ring* (ca. 1400) we are presented with a village community, but then we also meet a physician and other characters of a more elevated status. See the discussion of this text by Albrecht Classen in his *Introduction* to this volume, section Z.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, *Farce nouvelle du musnier et du gentilhomme, à quatre personnages, c'est à sçavoir l'abbé, le musnier, le gentilhomme et son page*; in *Recueil de livrets singuliers et rares dont la réimpression peut se joindre aux réimpressions déjà publiés [sic] par Caron* (Paris: Guiraudet, 1829). In the electronic catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale <<http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb33388950x/PUBLIC>> (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011).

He is specifically called “larron” (thief) by the abbot, who further warns him that as Lent approaches “. . . il te faut abstenir / De desrober le blé aux gens” (p. 4; you must desist / from stealing people’s wheat). Still, as Western narratives from Reynard and Robin Hood to *The A-Team* and *Leverage* tell us, crooks have their uses. The abbot, confronted by a most ignoble nobleman attempting to extort (with threats of enforced forfeiture or bodily injury) a huge loan for the abbey sitting on his lands,⁸⁷ turns in despair to the miller for a way out. Disguising himself as the priest, the miller faces off against the haughty *gentilhomme*, who has demanded, using a venerable fabulist motif, an answer to three impossible questions in order for the abbot to escape payment. True to an equally venerable comic form, the shrewd miller bests the gentleman at his own game, so that noble and play both conclude “A trompeur trompeur & demy” (p. 26; To a trickster, a trickster and a half). The miller even manages to rub it in how of “si vil prix” (p. 24; such little value) a nobleman really is: the answer he gives to the second question—how much the nobleman was worth—is 29 deniers, one less than the price Judas paid for Jesus.⁸⁸

Even more trounced by millerly wiles are the two gentlemen in the previously-referenced farce of *Les deux gentilshommes et le meunier*.⁸⁹ Again we see the all-too-easy exploitation of the small tradesman by the moneyed class, but with a delightfully twisted outcome. The indebted miller feels utterly powerless vis-à-vis those in power, against whom he cannot even expect justice: “On ne plaide point sans argent,” he complains to his wife (L 79; You can’t go to trial without money). The two cads of nobility, who own the mill, attempt to seduce the miller’s comely wife, openly referring to her as “le gibier de. . . chasse” (L 23; game to be hunted). The astute wife, knowing their weakness for her, devises a trick to get out of paying their back rent on the mill: she lures first the one, then the other into coming to her home on pretext of an illicit rendez-vous, in the process obtaining handsome sums from each one. She then immediately shuts them into the chicken coop. To pile even more humorous fodder on their predicament, the miller, in on the ruse, summons the gentlemen’s own wives there and seduces each one quite successfully, to the excruciating chagrin of the nobles, who are trapped inside the coop and forced to watch. Their venality is exposed, the miller’s debts are summarily released, and the miller concludes happily that sometimes, indeed, what goes around does come around: “Qu’à trompeur tromperye luy vient” (L 730; to a trickster, trickery comes back to him).

⁸⁷ Three hundred ecus, or five hundred francs, according to the text.

⁸⁸ As has been noted, the *Gentilhomme* is put in an impossible position; if he resists this, he is in effect contradicting holy writ. See Faivre, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 300–01.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, *Les deux gentilshommes et le meunier*, Tissier, I (1986), 307–94. It is another farce based on a *fabliau*, though with significant differences in character and motivation. See Tissier, I, 315–21.

Another exploitative nobleman gets his comeuppance, if not an all-out shellacking, by a more-shrewd-than-not villager, in the farce of *Le Gentilhomme et Naudet*.⁹⁰ Naudet, called a “un sot plein de sot langaige” (L 349; a fool full of foolish words) but in no wise acting like one,⁹¹ is cuckolded by his all-too-compliant wife and the nobleman, who conspire to sideline the put-upon peasant by sending him on all kind of errands.⁹² Naudet is requested to take the gentleman’s horse for a walk to cool it down,⁹³ then he is sent off to fetch wine, and finally, to get him out of the way long enough for their assignation, is packed off to deliver a letter to the noble’s wife. Naudet, feigning ignorance, fails at nearly every task given, even though he pretends to do precisely what is asked of him. By showing, rather than telling, the gentleman’s wife what her husband was up to with his own spouse (and thus keeping his word to the letter), Naudet gets the bittersweet revenge of cuckolding his upperclass rival. He calls attention to this tit-for-tat arrangement in his final address to the gentleman, whose coat—and symbolically, his identity—he had also appropriated on the sly:

Quand de Naudet tiendrés le lieu,
 Naudet seroit Monsieur, par Dieu.
 Gardez donc vostre seigneurie,
 Et Naudet sa naudeterie. (L 401–04)

[When you are in Naudet’s place,
 Naudet will be Milord, by God.
 Keep to yourself your lordliness
 And Naudet won’t stray from his Naudiness.]

⁹⁰ Anonymous, *Le Gentilhomme et Naudet*, Tissier, I (1986), 245–303. Faivre’s title is *Le gentilhomme, Lison, Naudet, et la damoiselle*. According to Tissier, this play may also be a loose adaptation of one of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* (see note 7).

⁹¹ There has been quite some scholarly discussion as to what kind of character Naudet is. I tend to take my cues from a character’s actions rather than what others onstage call someone, and it seems evident that Naudet is much more clever than he lets on. This is no gawking Mahuet or even credulous Pierrot. If Naudet were dressed as a badin (i.e. wearing a biggins), that would also have pegged him as a type—which would have proved very engaging for audiences as they saw him squaring off against his noble foe with a canniness disguised only very thinly as ineptitude. See J.-C. Aubailly, “Facétie narrée et facétie jouée,” *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance*, vol. VII ([Montpellier]: Association d’étude sur l’humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, 1978); see also J.-Ch. Payen, “Un ancêtre de Figaro: le badin Naudet dans la farce du Gentilhomme” *Mélanges de littérature et d’histoire offerts à Georges Couton*, ed. Jean Jehasse (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981), 15–22.

⁹² The play also presents other rural realities, such as Pierrot being sent out to fetch firewood (L 33) and cooling down a flagon of wine in a bucket of cold water (L 130).

⁹³ The play actively deals with equine matters: besides having to be cooled down, the horse is said to be tormented with flies, is accused of being skittish to certain riders, needs to be stabled, and even knows its way home. Tissier’s analysis of the probable staging suggests the standard two-men-in-a-horse-suit.

In two farces, characters that symbolize the rural are contrasted with those who epitomize the urban as well as the urbane. The ribald farce *Le Faulconnier de ville*, which satirizes the traditional male bastion of hunting, presents audiences with the triple threat of a lecherous and cunning Parisian dandy (the “Faulconnier de ville” in question) on the prowl for women; a highly trained country falconer or huntsman (“Le Faulconnier champestre”) as skilled at his hunt as his city cousin but, despite the horn in his hand, as innocent as a babe; and a greedy, grasping nobleman.⁹⁴ The first half of the play is a virtual debate culminating in poetic flourishes between the first two characters, who vaunt their respective prowesses in dominating their vision of the wild world in a game of one-upmanship. While the country huntsman must blow his horn to flush out his bestial prey,⁹⁵ the city slicker merely whistles to attract his, and the quest is on. The two similarly compare their weaponry, one literal, one metaphorical, with comical results. The country hunter admits he takes pleasure not merely in seeking his prey of wild boar or deer, as he sits high on his hackney accompanied by his two or three faithful hounds, but in contemplating the immense joys of the natural world⁹⁶:

Je congnois les quartiers du boys / . . . /
 Aussi nul ne sçauroit comprendre
 La joyeuseté qui y est,
 La belle petite herbe y croist
 Et le rossignol y chante. (L 82, 86–89)

[I know all the places in the woods . . .
 And no one could understand
 The delight that is there,
 The beautiful grass growing there
 And the nightingale singing.]

⁹⁴ Anonymous, *La farce du faulconnier de ville, qui emmaine la beste privee*, *Recueil*, ed. Cohen (see note 20), 203–09. It is important to note that the “Faulconnier champestre,” while quite comfortably positioned within the rural sphere, is no peasant; he is a horseman and has a page to attend him; see L 92–109.

⁹⁵ Judging from the reaction of the city hunter to the sound of the horn, he may be suffering from a hangover: “. . . tu me romps bien la teste” (L 35; you’re busting my head open). Such dissipation would only add to the humor of the character and the situation.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the societal significance of the traditional male bastion of hunting in the Middle Ages, see Robert Fossier, *The Axe and the Oath: Ordinary Life in the Middle Ages*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (2007; Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 208–15. The country falconer’s rhetoric evokes the “landscape” concept of the medieval forest, with its highly romanticized courtly associations. See Albrecht Classen’s Introduction to this volume, section E.

A nobleman chances upon the pair, accusing them of poaching on his lands and calling upon them to show him due reverence.⁹⁷ In part to defend himself from suspicion, the city huntsman shows off his wolf-whistle, which effectively summons a nubile young woman. But neither country hunter nor gentleman are adept at capturing this game: both are hoodwinked by the city sophisticate into playing blind man's bluff for the chance to pass time with the silent lass, whereupon the dandy hastily decamps with her as prize, or more aptly, prey.⁹⁸

The other play of this type, the mordantly satirical fool's play *Folle Bobance*, opens with the Mother Fool of late-medieval glamour, Folle Bobance, summoning a trio of allegorical characters: Gentleman, Merchant, and Peasant. In this pointedly didactic *sottie moralisée*, with its hint of a capitalist updating of the three estates,⁹⁹ the peasant's traditional virtues of hard work and accumulation of lands and livestock prove no match for the temptations of riotous living—no more than the nobleman's courtly polish or the merchant's sharp business acumen. Folle Bobance tempts these characters, who are from the outset identified as her fools, cajoling them to sell all they have to buy her pearl of great price: style-impassioned, dissolute revelry.¹⁰⁰ Along with his fellows, the hardscrabbling peasant laborer succumbs to her seduction, selling a score of pigs and a score of cattle along with his fields and vineyards; she has persuaded him to run through them all, to spend on good times and finery:

Je mengeray et blé et grange
Et les raisins tous en verjus / . . . /
Par labeur j'ay esté deceus;
Mieulx vault gaudir et despencer. (272–73)

[I have consumed both wheat and farm
And the still-green grapes / . . . /
Working has disappointed me;
It is better to make merry and spend.]

⁹⁷ He calls them "villains gentilloys" (L 280; nobilified peasants).

⁹⁸ The female character evokes an almost deconstructionist "presence of absence," being literally mute during her entire time onstage (the directions specify "Icy vient une belle fille de dehors sans mot dire"). The game is said to originate from a warrior in the 10th century who had his eyes put out. See <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin-maillard> (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011).

⁹⁹ Traditionally held to be church, nobility, and peasantry, in that order. See Georges Duby, *Les trois ordres, ou, L'imaginaire du féodalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978); see also Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 20–24. It is an intriguing but unproven instance of what seems the ascendance of the merchant class during the early modern period.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous, *Folle Bobance, Ancien Théâtre François*, vol. II, ed. Viollet le Duc (Paris: P. Jannet, 1854), 264–91. The title is often modernized as *Bombance*. It is also listed in Picot's collection of fool's plays, *Recueil général de sotties*, I, 235–70.

His two companions in yielding to temptation also offer up all they have; their opulence in living above their means differs from the peasant worker's prodigality only in degree.¹⁰¹ To be sure, at the end, when the three have spent it all (even money lent to them in good faith), fair-weather friend Folle Bobance abandons them to the *Chateau de pouvreté* (castle of poverty), where they must live out their lives in hardship and misery.

We will never know fully to what extent the presence of the rural was represented onstage in this period. What we do know is that, of the 176 extant farces of the late-medieval / early-modern periods, well over a third (by my count 66), are firmly rooted in the country, be it via setting, plot or character.¹⁰² Intriguingly, while many farces that contrast noble/ city and lower class/ rural characters (generally showing one class trying to hoodwink the other), there are nearly as many *villains* emerging triumphant as there are upper-class characters; in many plays the characters end in a virtual draw.¹⁰³ And while the plays do present some of chief comical characteristics regarding peasantry in the late Middle Ages—rustics as contemptible, swarthy and dirty, ignorant of religion, associated with excrement—these qualifiers are by no means the end of the story for the characters that inhabit the farces.¹⁰⁴ Often gullible, sometimes astoundingly stupid, but only occasionally soiled, the rural characters in late-medieval French farces also come across as clever, resourceful, even wily businessmen or tradeswomen. Some are stubborn or outspoken, some as adept at finding ways to get out of work as others are at tumbling into an illicit liaison. Stereotypes do play their part: there are more simpleton male peasant characters than female, and more cheating country wives than husbands. It is of some note that the female

¹⁰¹ As one critic has pointed out, the gentleman's extravagance and sartorial splendor is considered the most extreme—and thus to be imitated—according to the Mother Fool. See Pauline M. Smith, *The Anti-Courtier Trend in Sixteenth Century French Literature*. Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance, 84 (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 83.

¹⁰² I use Faivre's listing, and I do not consider the Tabarinic farces in this accounting (see note 7).

¹⁰³ In my calculation, peasants outwink or overcome city or noble characters in at least five farces: *Mestre Trubert*, *Pathelin*, *Maistre Mimin*, *Le meunier et le gentilhomme*, and *Deux gentilhommes*. City scoundrels or corrupt nobles best guileless peasants in *Cautelleux*, *Jeninot*, *Trois galants et Phlipot*, *Arqueminion*, *L'homme à mes pois*, *Les femmes qui vendent amourettes*, and *Le curia*. (I am not lumping plays that pit peasants against local priests or unscrupulous wives into this impromptu survey.) Plays involving some kind of rural/urban struggle that more or less ends in a tie include *Mahuet*, *Les enfants de Bagneux*, *Le gentilhomme et Naudet*, *Le faulconnier de ville*, and *Folle Bobance*. This might tend to corroborate what the Introduction to this volume has alluded to already, that the rigid separation between noble and peasant, or city dweller and rustic villager, might be more of a projection than an accurate depiction of medieval life. See Albrecht Classen's comments in the Introduction to this volume, section 10; cf. also the comments by Nicolino Applauso in his contribution to this volume.

¹⁰⁴ See Freedman, *Images* (see note 3), 133–56. So as not to create interpretive expectations, I chose not to list these characteristics at the beginning.

characters nearly always show intellectual acuity—in finding ways to be maritally faithful as well as adventurous, in marshalling resources to protect and increase their agricultural products as well as defend their homes and their agency within it.¹⁰⁵ On the main, the farmers and villagers who populate French farces of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries offer a remarkably equitable view of human nature. In the countryside that was conjured up on the theatrical scaffold and in the public square, characters both foolish and shrewd, savvy and stupid, met, connived, swindled, were wised up—and left people laughing.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ I call attention to Sherri Olson's excellent study of women's cultural history in medieval England in this volume, "Women's Place and Women's Space in the Medieval Village. Her account of the records of the multitasking English women who wove their way into a rural place of their own resonates well with the dynamic, vigorous female characters in the farces about French rural space a century or two later.

¹⁰⁶ I am always informed by the excellent study of how farce operates: Bernadette Rey-Flaud's *La farce, ou la machine à rire: théorie d'un genre dramatique, 1450–1550* (Genève: Droz, 1984). For useful recent studies on humor in that period, see the collection of articles in *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

Chapter 23

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Uprooted Trees and Slaughtered Peasants: The Savaging of Rural Space in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532)

From the labyrinthine forests where knights errant wander, to the idyllic *loci amoeni* where they pause to rest, dream, and seek refuge from the war and violence around them, depictions of rural space permeate Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.¹ Inspired in part by the pastoral verses of classical writers including Hesiod and Virgil, and by the bucolic settings favored by Sannazaro and Boiardo in Renaissance Italy, the country landscapes that Orlando and his fellow paladins traverse are also a legacy of the romance tradition that Ariosto both appropriates and parodies in his mock epic. From the *Tristan* legends to the Arthurian cycle and beyond, romance landscapes typically vacillate between castle and country, eschewing urban locales and the stark realism that often accompanies them in favor of dark woods, mysterious gardens, fog-shrouded seascapes, and other loci of enchantment. In many ways, Ariosto invokes this tradition in his *Orlando Furioso* (first version in 1516, final, completed version printed in 1532), with its meandering knights and damsels in distress who navigate forests and streambeds, cliffs and caves, treacherous mountain slopes and wave-swept beaches, turbulent oceans and cloud-studded skies.

This is only one side of his hybrid and unstable topography, however, which is by turns urban and courtly, utopian and arcadian, imaginary and realistic. To

¹ Evocations of the *locus amoenus* in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, which appear early in the first canto (cf. 1.14–15, where the fleeing Angelica happens upon Ferrarù, who “had withdrawn . . . early from the battle” to “slake his thirst and to rest,” 2) and reappear many times thereafter, are far too numerous to list here. Quotations in Italian from the *Orlando Furioso*, accompanied by canto and stanza numbers, are taken from Ludovico Ariosto, *Opere*, ed. Adriano Seroni (Milan: Mursia, 1961). Unless otherwise noted, English translations in the remainder of this paper are from Guido Waldman, *Orlando Furioso* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), a prose rendering of Ariosto's forty-six canto poem. References to the translation are indicated by page numbers only.

understand the complex metaphorical resonances of Orlando's madness, which explodes violently onto a peaceful country setting occupied by peasants, shepherds, and farmers in cantos 23 and 24, we must examine the broader topographical context in which Ariosto inscribes this pivotal episode.

Against the author's fanciful "natural" backdrop, which is rife with demons and monsters and too violent to qualify as bucolic, the accoutrements of civilization nevertheless figure prominently in the *Orlando Furioso*. Ariosto's descriptions of cities, courts, and castles, and his predilection for both utopian and arcadian discourse, generate a tension between nature and culture that informs his entire mock epic, including Orlando's overtly rural madness scene. Previously portrayed as a *uomo universale* ("Renaissance Man"), the protagonist mutes into a crazed *uomo naturale* (natural man) who paradoxically savages nature by uprooting trees, hurling rocks, and massacring peasants upon learning of his lady love's marriage to a simple Saracen soldier.

Orlando's aberrant return to, and yet destruction of, nature may derive in part from St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, which implicitly characterizes the natural man as a fool or madman whose unreason blinds him to the wisdom of God's teachings: "But [the] natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him; and he cannot know [them] because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2.14).²

From a purely theological perspective, the protagonist's self-destructive love for a pagan woman certainly figures as both a civic and spiritual lapse: not only is he blind to "the things of the Spirit of God" that afford Christians a spiritual compass, but he has abandoned the defense of Christendom to follow the enemy, in a misguided conflation of courtly and divine love.³ Yet arguably the protagonist's

² I have included the Darby translation of the Bible both for its use of the terms "natural man" and "folly," which was often used interchangeably with "madness" in Renaissance texts; and for the painstaking linguistic research and analysis of ancient texts that inform it. See <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%202:14&version=DARBY> (last accessed on September 30, 2011). In comparison, see the Latin Vulgate version of this text, which also focuses on *stultitia* or folly: "Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei stultitia est enim illi et non potest intellegere quia spiritaliter examinatur": http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/Vulgate/1_Corinthians.html [last accessed on September 30, 2011]). While several modern Italian translations of the New Testament refer to "follia" rather than "pazzia" for the English "folly" and the Latin "stultitia," moreover, the following translation from the Bibbia Riveduta (Revised Bible) refers to the natural man's sense that godly things are "pazzia," in a perceptual reversal that implicitly reflects his own madness: "Or l'uomo naturale non riceve le cose dello Spirito di Dio, perché gli sono pazzia; e non le può conoscere, perché le si giudicano spiritualmente." See: http://lasacrabibbiaelaconcordanza.lanuovavia.org/la_sacra_bibbia_46_1_corinzi.html#pco2_2 (last accessed on September 30, 2011).

³ This confusion hinges upon the name "Angelica," which is a tongue-in-cheek and paradoxical reference to the "donna angelicata" of courtly poetry, whose purity and spirituality ostensibly

breakdown is also a function of the warring cultural, psychological, and natural forces that are embedded within Ariosto's shifting landscapes.

Deeply influenced by romance tradition, castles and courts ranging from Alcina's realm (cantos 6–7) to Atlante's palace (cantos 2–4, 12) abound in Ariosto's sequel to the *Orlando Innamorato*, many of them enlivened by sweet music, dancing, and an explosion of decorative arts inspired by Renaissance esthetics. For the most part these edifices are neither urban nor "social" spaces, notwithstanding their external walls that cultural historians view as markers of city building in the era.⁴ Instead they function as romance sites of entrapment, dissension, or injustice; as stylized vehicles of allegory or solitary retreats into melancholy and self-pity; and as illusory "pleasure domes" that distance paladins including Orlando from the *civitas*, offering them momentary respite from their civic commitments.⁵

Notwithstanding the antisocial, dystopic nature of these communal spaces and the rarity of cityscapes in Ariosto's eighth-century plot, which takes place prior to the formation of large urban communities throughout medieval Europe, the *Orlando Furioso* nevertheless functions historically and thematically as a tale of two cities: in addition to chronicling the medieval defense of Paris against Moorish invaders, Ariosto's mock epic prophesies the glory of Renaissance Ferrara, unfolding primarily in the geographical and temporal space between these two loci.⁶

ennobled the poet who adored her, bringing him closer to God, a common notion in all medieval courtly love poetry.

⁴ See R. S. Lopez and H. A. Miskimin, "The Economic Depression of the Renaissance," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 14.3 (1962): 408–26.

⁵ For example, Atlante's magic castle, where knights become entrapped in a vain and labyrinthine quest for the object of their obsessions (12.9–15), is designed to keep Ruggiero in a state of perpetual innocence and youth, to protect him from his civic and marital destiny, and to defer his entry into the world of experience and subsequent death. In contrast, Alcina's enchanted realm (cantos 6–7) allegorically represents the temptation of *lussuria*, or lust and sensuality, for which Astolfo and Ruggiero abandon their civic duties; and the more realistic Scottish castle (cantos 4–5) from which Rinaldo rescues Ginevra is rife with deceit, treachery, and legally sanctioned injustice. Even the palatial abode of the Mantuan knight (cantos 42–43), who offers Rinaldo the opportunity to assay his wife's fidelity, is luxurious but solitary. It is filled with Renaissance art, but devoid of the life and energy that his wife (whose fidelity he challenged so doggedly that she finally abandoned him) and their eventual children would have brought him. True, there are exceptions to these societal anti-models, including Logistilla's allegorical realm, where reason prevails, and perhaps the city of Ferrara; but overall, castle life in the *Orlando Furioso* is more dystopic than utopian.

⁶ Indeed, humanists were inclined to view the interregnum between classical antiquity and their own time as a cultural wasteland, a theme that Ariosto touches on at the beginning of Canto 34 with his discussion of the Harpies that reduced Italy to a state of blindness ("accecata" 34.1), error ("error" 34.1) and poverty ("povertà" 34.2) for so many years.

Even in the interstices of his text, where rural landscapes abound, Ariosto weaves scattered allusions to urban spaces into his exordia, his narrative asides and divagations, and his storyline. In his account of the siege of Paris (cantos 14–17), for example, the Ferrarese author describes the beleaguered Frankish cityscape with remarkable realism. As Michael Murrin points out, Ariosto's avoidance of the marvelous in this episode and his painstaking portrayal of "a real city" with burning houses, ruined churches, and wailing women (17.13) "edged military fiction decisively toward history" and away from romance.⁷

Despite the quantity and variety of Ariosto's predominantly rural vignettes, then, which showcase magi in caves, meadows strewn with bodies, peasants running through the fields, and rustic love scenes in secluded glens, many would argue that his primary focus lies elsewhere: not on the countryside where paladins escape civic responsibilities, but rather on the *civitas* that they must defend or (re)build. In his tributes to contemporary navigators and artists and his flattery of his patrons, Astolfo and Ippolito Este, Ariosto almost invites us to read the *Orlando Furioso* as a paean to culture rather than nature. In purely quantitative terms, country settings may well outnumber courts and cities in the mock epic's forty-six cantos, especially if we include battlefields and meadows despoiled by marauding soldiers as rural space.

Yet upon closer inspection, the defense of Paris and romance between Ruggiero and Bradamante, whose union sets the stage for civic progress and the construction of a utopian city state in the marshes of eastern Italy, serve as anchors that lend Ariosto's massive and meandering masterwork its overarching structural

⁷ Michael Murrin, "The Siege of Paris," *Modern Language Notes* 103.1 (January 1988), Italian Issue: *Perspectives on Ariosto's Orlando Furioso*: 134–53; here 153. Building upon the scholarship of Pio Rajna (*Le fonti dell'Orlando Furioso*. 2nd ed. [Florence: Sansoni, 1900]), Edmund Gardner (*The King of Court Poets: A Study of the Life, Times, and Work of Lodovico Ariosto* [1906; London: Constable, 1968]), Giulio Bertoni (*L'Orlando Furioso e la rinascenza a Ferrara* [Modena: Orlandini, 1919]), and Barbara Reynolds (trans., *Orlando Furioso (The Frenzy of Orlando): A Romantic Epic* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975–1977], pts. 1–2), Murrin also notes that "most modern critics have stressed the fantasy in the *Orlando Furioso*, but it was rather the realism of certain scenes which affected, perhaps even generated, a new approach to heroic poetry in the later sixteenth century. More particularly, the poet presented Agramante's assault on Paris with a plasticity unprecedented in previous romance" (134). Murrin goes on to say that "the Italian wars [of the Renaissance] made sense out of Ariosto's [medieval] plot and were in any case the background required by the poet's rhetorical situation" (141). With occasional errors, the Ferrarese poet actually maps out contemporary fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Paris (see Reynolds, trans. [see note 7], 1.474–77) and describes military practices and technology that postdate those of the Middle Ages, including fortified camps or "mobile fortress cit[ies]," a pontoon bridge (16.31), and exploding mines (27.24). Ariosto's description of wooden houses, highly flammable, is also consistent with the cityscape of late fifteenth-century Paris; and his focus on large numbers of civilian casualties is far more reflective of military practices in the Italian Wars of the early sixteenth century than of romance warfare (Murrin, 139–40).

and thematic coherence. In contrast, the author's myriad rural and courtly episodes, where knights errant dash off to save damsels in distress, follow their hearts, and defer their public obligations figure as digressions that co-opt this central civic storyline on numerous occasions—partly in the interest of suspense and to please a courtly audience weaned on Boiardo's fanciful subplots, and partly to explore the vagaries of human psychology and the "other" side(s) of civilization.

Ultimately, both types of settings are crucial components of Ariosto's narrative, which vacillates between arcadian and utopian goals: for Ruggiero and Bradamante's descendants, the narrator tells us, will at once restore "la prima età de l'oro" (3.18; "the first Golden Age"), implicitly rooted in an agrarian past, and found an advanced Renaissance city state, where "benign e buon governo" (3.18; "benign and good governance") coexists with technological advances.⁸

Few episodes reveal the intricacies of this polemic better than Orlando's "gran follia" (23–24), situated at the exact mid-point of the poem's forty-six cantos, which illustrates the hybridity of Ariosto's compositional strategies, the tension between nature and culture that informs his work, and the complexity of his treatment of rural space. It is upon this extended episode, which pits nature against culture and culture against nature in a kaleidoscopic maze of competing perspectives, ambiguous symbols and metaphors, and shifting thematic resonances and narrative modes, that this paper will focus.⁹

While the author idealizes the rustic setting where Angelica nurses Medoro back to health with salubrious herbs in a simple farmhouse, for example, this same peaceful country glen improbably ignites Orlando's madness when he glimpses amorous carvings on the trees, proclaiming his lady's love for another.¹⁰ Driven mad by the knowledge that Angelica has spurned him, the paladin enacts a return to nature that draws upon Golden Age tropes: casting off his armor and, with it, his public identity, the French warrior lives on acorns ("giande," 24.12), wild game (goats, fawns, bears, and boars, which he eats "carcass and all," 285; 24.13), and the "humble fare" (284; "povere vivande," 24.12) of shepherds.¹¹

⁸ The translations are mine.

⁹ Many scholars have noted the ambiguities of Ariosto's text, as well as his penchant for associating signifiers with multiple signifieds and for shifting his perspective to reveal new dimensions of "old" symbols and metaphors. See, for example, Eduardo Saccone, "Wood, Garden, *Locus Amoenus* in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*," *Modern Language Notes* 112. 1 (Jan. 1997): 1–20.

¹⁰ As Renzo Negri points out, "E singolare che il cataclisma . . . si annunci e si volga su di un placido sfondo di natura" ("It is odd that the cataclysm should begin and unfold against a placid natural background"). See his *Interpretazione dell'Orlando Furioso* (Milano: Marzorati, 1972), 82.

¹¹ For more on Ariosto's use of the Golden Age trope and a discussion of its importance in Renaissance literature, see Elizabeth A. Chesney, *The Countervoyage of Rabelais and Ariosto: A Comparative Reading of Two Renaissance Mock Epics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982), 26–28; and Harry Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana

Yet here the analogy with the “noble savage” ends, as Orlando uproots trees and bushes (“rami et ceppi e tronchi e sassi e zolle / non cessò di gittar,” 23.131) in his furor, beheads a frightened shepherd (“uno ne piglia, e del capo lo scema,” 24.5), batters the horses and oxen of neighboring farmers, and devastates both their fields and the surrounding countryside. It is upon this pivotal and powerful scene, situated at the midpoint of Ariosto’s hybrid and paradoxical mock epic, that this paper will focus. In it, I propose to explore the symbolic and real-world resonances of both Orlando’s madness and the pastoral landscape he ravages; the problematic interactions between humans and rural space that inform the episode; and, finally, the tensions between nature and culture that permeate the *Orlando Furioso* and the Renaissance as a whole.

In the course of this analysis, I will also be supplementing traditional psychological and symbolic modes of interpretation with an examination of the narrator’s changing perspectives and the way this enriches his potential “message,” with a look at the effect of word painting and pictorial elements within his narrative, and with a discussion of the socio-political and ecological implications of “la gran follia.”

Despite the extraordinary magnitude of Orlando’s dementia, scholars rightly note the psychological realism of his initial response to Angelica’s marriage.¹² Upon reading her amorous carvings, the paladin engages in classic denial, telling himself her words cannot be true: “Va col pensier cercando in mille modi / non creder quel ch’al suo dispetto crede,” the author tells us; “ch’altra Angelica sia creder si sforza, / ch’abbia scritto il suo nome in quella scorza” (23.103; “He searched in his mind for any number of excuses to reject what he could not help believing; he tried to persuade himself it was some other Angelica,” 278).

The paladin even imagines that the name “Medoro,” by virtue of the “or” and “do” embedded within it, is an imperfect anagram of Orlando, discreetly carved on the tree trunks by Angelica to veil the true object of her desire: “Finger questo Medoro ella si puote,” he ventures; “forse ch’a me questo cognome mette” (23.104; “Can she perhaps be inventing this Medor? Perhaps by this name she means me,” 278). By now clutching at straws, Orlando finally speculates in desperation that a third party must have inscribed Angelica’s name on the trees and stone in an effort to discredit his lady and arouse his own jealousy: “Pensa come / possa esser . . . / che voglia alcun così infamare il nome / de la sua donna e crede e brama et spera, / o graver lui d’insopportabil some / tanto di gelosia, che se ne pèra” (23.114; “He hoped against hope that it might simply be someone trying to besmirch his lady’s

University Press, 1969), 22, 28.

¹² For a discussion of the psychological verisimilitude of Orlando’s madness, see, for example, Enrico Nencioni, “Le tre pazzie: Orlando, King Lear, Don Chisciotte,” id., *Saggi critici di letteratura italiana* (Florence: Succ. Le Monnier, 1898), 143–75; Chesney, *The Countervoyage* (see note 11).

name this way, or to charge him with a burden of jealousy so unendurable that he would die of it," 279). The only drawback is the shape of the inscriptions, which strongly resemble Angelica's handwriting: "[Aveva] quel, sia chi si voglia stato, / molto la man di lei bene imitato," he rationalizes, in one final attempt to allay his fear (23.114; "Whoever it was who had done this had copied her hand most skilfully," 279).

When a farming couple confirms his suspicions, however, Orlando lashes out in rage not at them, but at the trees. Much like those who would "shoot the messenger," the French knight seeks to eradicate the news that has shattered his world by defacing a streamside cave and then uprooting the trees that bear witness to Angelica's love for Medoro: "Tagliò lo scritto e 'l sasso, e sin al cielo / a volo alzar fe' le minute schegge. / Infelice quell'antro, et ogni stelo / in cui Medoro e Angelica si legge" (23.130; "[He] slashed at the words and the rock-face, sending tiny splinters shooting skywards. / Alas for the cave, and for every trunk on which the names of Medor and Angelica were written," 281). There is, moreover, a paradoxical logic in the protagonist's destructive rampage. With the perfect specularity of a Dantean *contrapasso*, Orlando's devastation of rural space responds to the devastation that nature has visited on him. Angelica's *locus amoenus*, which nurtured her love for Medoro and provided an escape from the attentions of her suitors, is *not* amenable to Orlando. Indeed, it is the opposite—a *locus horridus*.¹³

If the pagan princess, earlier described as a lamb crying for its mother (1.34), is symbolically restored to the bosom of nature, becoming a nurturer in her own right as she tends Medoro's wounds, Orlando sees the death of his dreams in the fertile landscape, in a shift of perspective that is distinctively Ariostan: one woman's paradise, he suggests, is another man's hell, as "Mother" Nature—in one swift spin of Fortune's wheel¹⁴—turns *unmaternalistic* and rebuffs Orlando's cry for succor, anticipating the monstrous "*mères, non-mères*" of d'Aubigné's apocalyptic poetry (*Les Tragiques*, "*Misères*," I, v. 497).¹⁵

¹³ See Rosaria Patanè Ceccantini, *Il motivo del locus amoenus nell'Orlando furioso e nella Gerusalemme liberata* (Lausanne: University of Lausanne, 1996), 35: "Il *locus amoenus* di Angelica e Medoro si trasforma in *locus horridus* per Orlando" ("Angelica and Medoro's *locus amoenus* is transformed into a *locus horridus* for Orlando").

¹⁴ Indeed, Saccone attributes the vicissitudes of the *locus amoenus* in Ariosto almost exclusively to fortune ("Wood, Garden, *Locus Amoenus*" [see note 9], 9–10).

¹⁵ Ariosto himself emphasizes the figurative "death" of Orlando, and compares his despair to a living "hell": "Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso: / quel ch'era Orlando è morto et è sotterra; / la sua donna ingrattissima l'ha ucciso: / sì, mancando di fé, gli ha fatto Guerra. / Io son lo spirito suo da lui diviso, / ch'in questo inferno tormentandosi erra" (23.128; "I am not who my face proclaims me. The man who was Orlando is dead and buried, slain by his most thankless lady who assailed him by her betrayal. I am his spirit sundered from him, and wandering tormented in its own hell," 281).

If the countryside that Orlando decimates is an outward projection of his internal landscape,¹⁶ it is also imbued with a symbolism of its own that helps elucidate both the reasons for his breakdown and its figurative implications within the text. Clearly the botanical “slates” on which Angelica and Medoro inscribe their love for one another also figure as the Tree of Knowledge, offering Orlando an unpalatable truth that shatters his illusions and his identity as Christendom’s noblest hero, reducing him instead to a bestial, fallen state.¹⁷ While he does not “see” his nakedness literally, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he casts off his armor and becomes naked, in a meaningful reversal of the biblical trope and his identity as a hero who is chosen and protected by God: “Maglie e piaster si stracciò di dosso. / Qui riman l’elmo, e là riman lo scudo, / lontan gli arnesi, e più lontan l’usbergo: / [. . .] / Et poi si squarciò i panni, e mostrò ignudo / l’ispido ventre e tutto ‘l petto e ‘l tergo” (23.133–34; “He stripped off his armour and chain-mail,” the narrator tells us. “The helmet landed here, the shield there, more pieces of armour further off, the breastplate further still . . . Then he tore off his clothes and exposed his hairy belly and all his chest and back,” 282).

Like Edgar, and indeed the aging monarch himself, who divests himself of “all the borrowed articles of civilisation and tears off his clothes” in *King Lear*, Orlando is “the thing itself” as he storms madly through the countryside without love or the accoutrements of civilization, both of which structured and gave meaning to his prior existence.¹⁸ One is reminded of Agilulf, the perfect but non-existent

¹⁶ Patanè, *Il motivo del locus amoenus*, 29, notes the anthropomorphic quality of landscapes in general, and of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* in particular, in both Ariosto and Tasso: “L’Ariosto e il Tasso si sono ispirati a questo motivo per rappresentare un paesaggio ‘antromorfico’, cioè un paesaggio che corrisponda allo stato d’animo delle due protagoniste delle scene”.

¹⁷ In her “Genius, Madness, and Knowledge: Ficino, Landino, and Ariosto’s Lovers” (*Quaderni d’Italianistica* 26.2 [January 2005]: 3–27), Julia Cozzarelli tells us that “the *Furioso* is flush with Ariosto’s references to a schism in the concept of the self, especially connected to the loss of reason. He often refers to the weakness of reason in the face of strong passions. And he couches Orlando’s psychological struggle in words related to self-identity and its loss. The poet even foreshadows Orlando’s metaphorical death through madness when he describes him as lost in a forest. The narrator explains that Orlando had wandered from the trail, “come era uscito di se stesso” (“just as he had strayed from his true self”; 12.88)” (6).

¹⁸ See Sergej Macura, “‘The Thing Itself’: Ironc Hermeneutics of the Subject in *King Lear*,” *Trans: Revue de littérature générale et comparée* 11 (July 2009): 1–12: “On seeing his own self in the existential mirror, left at the mercy of the elements, bereft of all attributes of kingship, abandoned by his train of attendants, banished by his two daughters that he thought blameless, accompanied only with a professional fool, a fake madman and a heart-rent servant, Lear says to Edgar: “‘Thou art the thing itself’” (51), equating human essence and human existence on the example of a single man, a concrete embodiment of a suffer[ing] that is at the same time the suffer[ing] of Edgar and the suffer[ing] of Lear and of all poor naked wretches, wherever they are. It is at this point that he breaks up with all the borrowed articles of civilization and tears off his clothes, stepping into the order of nature, aware of the loss of items not necessary for the ultimate cognition of man’s condition—he now follows suit of Edgar and exhibits himself both as the equilibrium of the

knight in Italo Calvino's *Il cavaliere inesistente*: all form and no content, he ceases to exist when he casts off his armor or outward identity, dissipating into a puddle of nothingness.¹⁹

Ariosto's linkage of Orlando's madness to the Tree of Knowledge is particularly apt, given the paladin's repeated characterization as a man of great "sense" and intellectual acumen. Like Calvino's Agilulf, he was steeped in the protocols of knighthood and chivalry prior to his breakdown, acceding to women's pleas to be rescued and men's challenges to his honor with a fastidious, almost robotic, sense of duty. When Mandricardo challenges Orlando to a duel shortly before the latter's "gran follia," in fact, the Frankish paladin regretfully wishes that the Saracen could "see him on the inside" ("vo' che mi veggi dentro, come fuore," 23.75),²⁰ rather than confronting his public persona.

More importantly for our purposes, Orlando is also a polyglot, adept in the languages of humanistic inquiry: the text carved on the tree "era scritto in arabico,

subject and object of that natural philosophy, giving another meaning to the above-quoted sentence, that Lear may be the thing itself, too. Shortly after this passionate initiation, Lear explicitly desires: 'First let me talk with this philosopher (52),' 'this same learned Theban(53),' 'I will keep still with my philosopher[54].' Not having taken care of his essence when he should have, Lear now embraces unpreparedly the signifier of philosophical wisdom, while we may see sheer lunacy as the signified. The attempts of defining 'man' are actually present in the whole text, and no definition seems to fit it—from blissful to ignorant, from heavenly to beastly, from animate to inanimate; we face tautology in the predicate 'thing,' and the mirror of otherness (*thou*) may well be a self-descriptive utterance of Lear" (2) (<http://trans.univ-paris3.fr/spip.php?article369> [last accessed on September 30, 2011]).

¹⁹ See Italo Calvino, *Il cavaliere inesistente*, in *I nostri antenati* (Torino: Einaudi, 1960), 101–02: "Ai piedi d'una quercia, sparsi in terra, erano un elmo rovesciato dal cimiero color dell'iride, una corazza bianca, i cosciali, i bracciali, le manopole, tutti insomma i pezzi dell'armatura di Agilulfo, alcuni disposti come nell'intenzione di formare una piramide ordinata, altri rotolati al suolo alla rinfusa. . . . L'armatura è vuota, non vuota come prima, vuota anche di quel qualcosa che era chiamato il cavaliere Agilulfo e che adesso è dissolto come una goccia nel mare" ("At the foot of an oak tree, scattered over the ground, were an overturned helmet with a crest of iridescent plumes, a white breastplate, greaves, armpieces, basinet, gauntlets, in fact all the pieces of Agilulf's armor, some disposed as if in an attempt at an ordered pyramid, others rolled haphazardly on the ground. . . .] The armor was empty, not empty like before, but empty of that something going by the name of Sir Agilulf which was now dissolved like a drop in the sea," *The Nonexistent Knight and the Cloven Viscount*, trad. Archibald Colquhoun [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977], 131–32). The parallels with Orlando's identity crisis, expressed in part by his scattered armor in the "gran follia," are far from coincidental: in fact Calvino's novella is heavily inspired by the *Orlando Furioso* and is narrated by Bradamante. Lucia Re provides an excellent summary of these parallels in her chapter entitled "Ariosto and Calvino: The Adventures of a Reader," *Ariosto Today: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella, and Roberto Fedi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 211–27.

²⁰ The translation is mine. Drawing upon the fact that Orlando proceeds to remove his helmet in this scene, so that Mandricardo can look him squarely in the face, Guido Waldman translates the above passage as follows: "I shall have you look within me as well as without," 275.

che 'l conte / intendea così ben come latino: / fra molte lingue e molte ch'avea pronte, / prontissima avea quella il paladino" (23.110; "[It] was written in Arabic, which the count knew as well as he knew Latin . . . He knew many and many a tongue," 279). This linguistic prowess, in combination with his skill and training in manly arts such as fencing and jousting, makes him a small-scale version of the *uomo universale* or Renaissance Man, whose hubristic quest for truth, knowledge, power, and beauty is a commonplace of the era in which Ariosto wrote. When Orlando glimpses an alternative truth on the Tree of Knowledge, however, and deciphers it by dint of his uncommon learning, it not only clashes with the identity he has fashioned for himself as a man who never fails, but also challenges his intellect to the breaking point, as he struggles to understand the unthinkable: "Ma non si vanti, se già n'ebbe frutto," Ariosto tells us, "ch'un danno or n'ha, che può scontargli il tutto" (23.110; "He was not to boast if formerly his knowledge had helped him—the pain it now brought him quite discounted every former advantage," 279).

Not only do his vast wisdom and learning fail him, providing him no resource for coping with Angelica's marriage, but this single piece of inassimilable truth compromises the very foundations of his carefully cultivated world view, causing the entire edifice, with "all its borrowed articles of civilisation," to collapse.²¹ What we are left with is a "natural man," completely stripped of all the trappings of civilization—but unlike non-violent examples of this archetype, including King Lear, Edgar, the peaceful shepherds of Arcadian literature, or even the idealized "good savage" of Early Modern travel lore, Orlando is profoundly violent.²²

²¹ For an interesting interpretation of the reasons for Orlando's fixation on Angelica, the ultimate cause of his breakdown, and the ironic resonances of the Edenic setting where it takes place, see Peter DeSa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 111: "Ariosto's main concern is to study the emergence of a Herculean madness from a man's inability to accept an unalterable condition of life—the otherness of other people. For the Orlando of Ariosto's poem, Angelica is not the eternal feminine, but the eternal other, the focus of the labor that drives him mad. Orlando's quest for Angelica is the most vehement of all the quests in the *Furioso* for a lost Eden . . . The Orlando of the *Orlando Furioso* does not crave Angelica so much as he craves a prelapsarian world where faith can be replaced by certain knowledge." Wiggins goes on to explain Orlando's fixation on Angelica within the context of "the troubadours, the *dolce stil novo*, and Petrarca" (111), traditions that posit woman as a symbol of salvation.

²² That Ariosto was in part inspired by the tales of returning navigators in his depiction of Orlando is plausible, given his references to the voyages of discovery in his description of Vasco da Gama's route (15.22), his allusions to Pizarro and others as "i capitani di Carlo quinto" (15.23), his mention of Cortez by name, parallels between his paladins' itineraries and those of the conquistadores, and the vogue for travel literature at the Estense court. See Chesney, *The Countervoyage* (see note 11), 21, as well as Romeo Rosario, *Le Scoperte americane nella coscienza italiana del cinquecento* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1971); Giulio Bertoni, *La biblioteca estense* (Torino: Loescher, 1902); and Michele Vernero, *La geografia nell'Orlando Furioso* (Torino: Bonio and Rossi,

In addition to its connection with knowledge, Orlando's madness also parodies his military feats and satirizes the madness of war, which not only maims and kills knights who battle one another, but also produces suffering that extends far beyond the battlefield and into neighboring farmland. Without belaboring the point that Orlando himself is a casualty of war, psychologically damaged by the crescendo of violence and increasingly mechanical, robotic killing he engages in for his country, we cannot help but note parallels between this heroic carnage and the paladin's mad decimation of the countryside, slaughter of farm animals, and butchery of farmers and peasants following his breakdown.²³ Even prior to his "follia," the Frankish hero "taglia e fende e fiere e fora e tronca" (23.61; "sliced, skewered, speared, and lopped," 273) enemy soldiers, splitting "a crown in two" (273; "fece due parti de la testa," 23.60), and "lev[ando] dal busto il capo netto" (23.60; "[slicing] a head off its shoulders," 273).

Serving as a mirror image of his wartime heroics, the paladin's insane violence differs from its "sane" counterpart in two respects only: in the identity of his victims and in the weapons he uses. While the heroic Orlando slays his Saracen enemies in honorable combat, his crazed alter-ego butchers animals and farmers indiscriminately; and where the hero wielded a lance or sword, his demented twin hurls boulders, brandishes an uprooted tree, slays two shepherds with the beheaded carcass of another peasant, and "a pugn, ad urti, a morsi, a graffi, a calci, / cavalla e buoi rompe, fracassa e strugge" (283; "[kills] horse and oxen . . . by dint of punches, thumps, . . . bites, kicks and scratches," 24.7). Lest we miss the connection between the valiant soldier and crazed marauder, Ariosto emphasizes the demented paladin's "incredibil prove" and "possanza estrema" (24.5; "the madman's incredible feats and his prodigious strength," 283), using heroic language to showcase the scene's parodical quality, which hinges primarily on ironic parallels between the warrior and madman.

Despite the episode's tragic consequences for local peasants, in fact, and the pathos of Orlando's descent into madness, many readers have commented on the dark humor of this episode. "The scenes of overt madness are ruthlessly comic" (133), contends Peter DeSa Wiggins, drawing our attention to the buffoonish, marionette-like quality of the paladin's burlesque feats, which dehumanize his

1913). It is also likely that Ariosto draws upon previous depictions of mad knights, such as *La Folie Tristan*, where Tristan disguises himself as a fool or madman to gain access to the court of Marc and Iseut; and *Yvain, ou le chevalier au lion*, where the protagonist goes mad and wanders naked through the forest following his rejection by his wife Laudine, whom he has angered by his overlong absence from home. Neither of these characters is particularly violent, however.

²³ As Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry* (see note 21), points out, Orlando's "madness turns him into a caricature of his former self . . . His madness at this stage represents nothing more than an intensification, stripped of all sane appearances, of his behavior since his introduction in canto 8" (131).

rustic victims and anesthetize readers with the same farcical, slapstick cruelty that we see in modern cartoons. Numerous theories of laughter, and the incongruity model in particular, shed light on the mainsprings of Ariosto's unlikely humor: for the extraordinary carnage that Orlando inflicts on the rural setting and its peace-loving residents clashes dramatically, unexpectedly, and absurdly with both the idyllic surroundings that he besmirches and the radical heroism of his former life.

Moreover, the author portrays the atrocities through a shifting lens that elicits multiple responses from readers, ranging from laughter to pathos and discomfort. As a result, the dark humor of Orlando's madness scene in no way detracts from its serious content, but rather enhances and provides a vehicle for Ariosto's satire: first, by revealing war's absurdity in a comic, deprecatory light; and second, by unveiling the wide-ranging havoc it wreaks on local populations, their lands, and their livestock.

While Ariosto would have been a child living in Reggio-Emilia during the War of Ferrara (1482–1484),²⁴ he was almost certainly a witness to the devastation of later wars during his travels and during portions of the Great Italian Wars (1494–1559) in which battalions from Ferrara, under the command of Duke Alfonso d'Este, participated. This historical context at once inspires his military satire and informs his accounts of medieval battles, adding to the realism of his depictions of violence and devastation. Despite his glorification of the "goodness" of knights of old (3; "Oh gran bontà de' cavallieri antequi," 1.22), Ariosto's attitude toward war is by no means uncritical: like countless other humanists, he deplores the invention of firearms and gunpowder (11.22–28), draws our attention to the "corpses here, corpses there" (141; "Or mira questi, or quelli morti," 14.32–40) that are a fact of life in times of war, and subverts his own description of military

²⁴ Exactly how much these events affected the young Ludovico is uncertain. His father Niccolò, a citadel commander, was briefly transferred with his wife and children to Rovigo in 1481, when the marauding Venetians were already threatening the garrison; and in August of the next year, the citizens of Rovigo surrendered peacefully, as the Ariosto family lost all its possessions there. In November of 1482, Niccolò and his family moved back to Reggio, "which was suffering less than the rest of the Estensian dominion from the ravages of war, but did not pass completely exempt" [Gardner, *The King of Court Poets*, 13]. In canto 19, stanza 83 of the *Orlando Furioso*, however, the poet writes as an eyewitness to the ravages of war: "Ho veduto bombarde a quella guise / le squadre aprir, che fe' lo stuol Marfisa" ("I have seen bombards split ranks apart the way Marfisa tore through the enemy," 226). See also his Madrigal XVI: "Io venni dove le campagne rosse / eran del sangue barbaro e latino, / . . . e vidi un morto e l'altro sì vicino, / che senza premer lor, quasi il terreno / A molte miglia non dava il camino / . . . / Vidi uscir crudeltà, che ne devria / tutto il mondo d'orror rimaner pieno" (http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ITA1875/_P22.HTM#96 [last accessed on October 23, 2011]; "I came where the fields were red with barbarian and Italian blood, / . . . / and I saw one corpse and another so close to it / that without stepping on them, the ground / for many miles did not leave a path / . . . / I saw such cruelty, that the whole world / should remain filled with the horror of it" [my translation].

pageantry by honing in on familial emblems connoting brokenness.²⁵ The chaotic, surrealistic reminders of Paolo Uccello that inform these panoramas are also present in Orlando's madness scene, where flying armor, rocks, trees, and body parts crowd the "canvas" and vie for position in the foreground, while "a thousand men stream down" (283; "Veder dai monti sdruciolarne mille," 24.8) from a vanishing point up in the hills, "per fare al pazzo un villanesco assalto" (24.8; "ready to wage a peasant war against the madman," 283).²⁶

Despite Guido Waldman's provocative translation of the term "villanesco assalto" as "peasant war," which recalls the rumblings of discontent among *villains* or *villani* in the sixteenth century, these words were already present in the 1516 and 1521 editions of the *Orlando Furioso*, well before the German Peasants' War of 1524–1525. While this timeline eliminates the possibility that Ariosto was referring specifically to this Northern uprising, however, which would have been known to him by 1532, the episode's general socio-economic resonances are nevertheless inescapable: for in the madman's triumph over the *villani* or peasants, we find yet another example of a powerful nobleman, the crazed Count of Anglante, abusing his social inferiors and figuratively "biting the hand" that provides his shelter, his clothing, and his food.

On one level, Ariosto does little on the surface to encourage our sympathy for these unnamed, hardworking peasants, who are rooted in contemporary reality rather than in the idyllic landscapes of Arcadia where idealized shepherds dream and sing of love.²⁷ Instead, the narrator calls them an "empia turba" (283), or a wicked, ungodly throng, and compares them to a force of nature, hostile to our hero and unleashed in all its fury:

Qual venir suol nel salso lito l'onda
mossa da l'austro ch'a principio scherzo,
che maggior de la prima è la seconda,
e con più forza poi segue la terza,
et ogni volta più l'umore abonda,
e ne l'arena più stende la sferza;

²⁵ These include a "lance broken in three" (101), a "boat sinking at sea" (102), "a cleft mountain" (102), and a "cloven chair" (102).

²⁶ While neither a peasant army nor soldiers stream down from the hills in Uccello's three-paneled *Battle of San Romano*, painted in the mid-1400s, both his use of perspective and the thematically incongruent (but historically common) presence of soldiers, horses, farmers, and wildlife in the paintings anticipate Ariosto's depiction of Orlando's madness.

²⁷ See Ceccantini, *Il motivo del locus amoenus*, 16: "Al pari dei Greci d'un tempo, i pastori virgiliani sono dunque chiamati arcadi non per la loro origine, ma perché valenti nel canto bucolico." The author moreover points out Ariosto's tendency to inform his landscapes and *loci amoeni*, even those that are most fanciful, with "l'impronta del concreto" (54) or reflections on reality.

tal contra Orlando l'empia turba cresce,
che giù da balze scende et di valli esce. (24.9)

Imagine waves, driven by the South Wind
which earlier had been playful, breaking on the shore.
The second wave is higher than the first,
the third follows with greater force;
and each time, the water builds up more
and seethes more widely across the beach.
Thus did the pitiless mob increase (283).

However, closer inspection of the text reveals the reason for the peasants' hostility and their attack on Orlando, who has polluted their stream: "Rami e ceppi e tronchi e sassi e zolle / non cessò di gittar ne le bell'onde," the narrator tells us, "fin che da sommo ad imo sì turbolle, / che non furo mai più chiare né monde" (23.131; "Branches, stumps, and boughs, stones and clods he kept hurling into the lovely waters until he so clouded them . . . that they were clear and pure never again," 281). The crazed paladin also uproots "cerri e d'altre piante antiche" (23.135; "oaks and other age-old timber," 282), and slaughters the country folk's livestock. When the shepherds flee the madman following the beheading of a fellow herdsman, Ariosto tells us, Orlando turns upon their flocks ("era già volto al loro armento," 24.6), killing the peasants' sheep and butchering their horses and oxen. Indeed, the carnage that the paladin inflicts is so cataclysmic that nearby farmers or "agricoltori" abandon their "ploughs, hoes, and sickles" (283) in fear, strewing these tools of their livelihood across the fields and sacrificing their crops to the marauding soldier.

Taken out of context, words such as "campi" (fields), "falci" (sickles), and "aratri" (ploughs) ironically paint a bucolic agricultural scene worthy of Brueghel, where farmers toil unheroically, but peacefully and productively, to provide foodstuff not just for themselves, but for their community and the region as a whole. What results is a hybrid montage of pastoral, agricultural, and military elements, enriched by the iconography of madness and natural disaster: images of war, plunder, death, and destruction explode violently into the foreground of a radically different "original" canvas, which lingers—visible and yet absent—as a trace within the background, drawing our gaze repeatedly to a Golden Age tableau, present only in our memories, that has been effaced.

In this discordant panorama of a shattered paradise, with its disturbing "before and after" views of a single landscape, Ariosto offers readers a glimpse of the agricultural devastation visited on Italy by repeated invasions, marauding mercenaries and foreign troops, and persistent domestic warfare during the late

fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²⁸ Far from being atypical of Ariosto, reminders such as these of the underside of the Renaissance appear repeatedly throughout the *Orlando Furioso*, momentarily jarring the deceptive façade of harmony (“armonia”) and serenity (“serenità”) that spurred critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to label the author “detached,” undisturbed by the real-world problems embedded with his text, and emotionally removed from the pathos and violence of his narrative. As readers of his *Satires* and the comedy *Lena* know, however, nothing could be farther from the truth. Glimpses of contemporary political tensions, social injustices, and abuses of power figure repeatedly in his texts, not simply in his explicit condemnation of the Harpies that prey on Renaissance Italy (34.1–3), but also in the topical allusions and implicit parallels with real life that inform his fiction.

As we unravel the “knot” of Orlando’s hybrid representation as both a “natural man” and a cultural icon, important insights about the interactions of humans and rural space and about the tensions between nature and culture throughout the *Orlando Furioso* begin to emerge.²⁹ For all his bestiality following his breakdown, Orlando represents high culture, at least of a sort: as the Count d’Anglante and a military hero, he belongs to the *noblesse d’épée* of medieval France and, by virtue of his education and linguistic sophistication, to the world of learned Renaissance culture as well. Neither the *locus amoenus* where Angelica nursed Medoro back to health nor the surrounding countryside is Orlando’s own habitat, yet he plunders and defaces it thoughtlessly, vandalizing and appropriating what is not his own with cavalier disregard for its use value to others or for its innate worth.³⁰

²⁸ In his “The Economy of Renaissance Italy: The Preconditions for Luxury Consumption,” *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*, vol. 2 (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 15–39, Richard Goldthwaite also points out the economic importance of war for smaller Italian cities of the Renaissance: “War, in other words, was an economic activity in Italy that redistributed wealth in a way that did not happen elsewhere in Europe; and its profits paid for much of the patronage in Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino and a host of smaller places” (25). In other words, the satire of war in Orlando’s madness scene reflects not only on contemporary politics and on the rural devastation that resulted from these ongoing battles, but also on the economic ramifications of war, which fueled urban growth and luxury consumption in towns at the expense of rural populations.

²⁹ Eduardo Saccone disagrees. “It is not the opposition, say, between nature and culture that matters in Ariosto,” he contends (“Wood, Garden, *Locus Amoenus*” [see note 9], 6).

³⁰ As Rosaria Patanè Ceccantini points out, this paradigm is longstanding: even in classical works, the *locus amoenus* frequently offers succor and solace to aristocrats. (*Il motivo del locus amoenus*, 11, 13). Without specifically stating that Orlando’s morality is typically aristocratic, moreover, Wiggins portrays him as an unthinking and somewhat irresponsible knight who “stands in a vast moral middle ground where much harm is accomplished and some good, but both by inadvertence” (*Figures in Ariosto’s Tapestry* [see note 21], 110) This description might easily apply to any number of Renaissance noblemen, who had little understanding of “the Other” and thus little inkling of the ways their daily routines impacted those around them — sometimes positively, but often in very adverse ways. Orlando’s assumption that Angelica — one of the spoils of war — is

Literally, of course, he is mad. Ariosto tells us that Orlando's "every sense was darkened" (282; "In tanta rabbia, in tanto furor venne, / che rimase offuscato in ogni senso," 23.134), along with his powers of reason. Yet the reflexes of a nobleman remain: not his sense of *noblesse oblige*, to be sure, which was a learned behavior cast off with his armor, but rather an atavistic sense of entitlement, arguably based upon rank and power, which is ironically identical to its uncivilized double—the law of the jungle. What results is a hero-turned-monster, whose might, like that of Molière's *Dom Juan*, is untempered by concern for others or considerations of conscience.³¹ When he beheads a shepherd and uses the trunk of the man's body as a bludgeon, he does so "con la facilità che torria alcuno / da l'orbor pome, o vago fior dal pruno" (24.5; "with the ease of a person plucking an apple from a tree or a dainty bloom from a briar," 283), Ariosto tells us; similarly, he uproots trees effortlessly "come fossen finocchi, ebuli o aneti" (23.135; "as though they were so many celery-stalks," 282).

The author's goal, on the one hand, is to showcase the protagonist's physical strength; yet by divorcing Orlando's brawn from the context that legitimized it—namely, from the "honorable" context of national defense, helping the oppressed, and upholding the faith—Ariosto separates "might" from "right," interrogates the entire concept of heroism, and shifts our attention to the profound abuse of power that informs the scene. Instead of standing alone in the service of others, either to lead his men or save the downtrodden, Orlando singlehandedly overpowers thousands of peasants, in a meaningful reversal of the chivalric paradigm: "Con spuntoni et archi e spiedi e frombe / [potreste] veder dai monti

his for the taking, without regard for her own feelings, reflects this mindset, which we also see in nouvelle 8 of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*. In that story, a married man plots to sleep with his wife's maidservant, and while the plan is foiled, a female storyteller remarks afterwards that serving girls are routinely dismissed for the transgressions of their masters: "Où avez-vous veu, respondit Saffredent, que nous ayons pourchassé les chamberieres de noz femmes? — Si celles à qui il touche, dit Longarine, vouloient dire la vérité, l'on trouveroit bien chamberiere à qui l'on a donné congé avant son quartier" (*Heptaméron*, ed. Michel François [Paris: Garnier, 1960], 47; "Who told you, answered Saffredent, that we chase after our wives' serving girls?—If those involved would tell the truth, said Longarine, one would find many a chambermaid who has been dismissed before her time" [my translation]). Presumably these dismissals took place at the behest of suspicious wives or when the maid became pregnant and had to leave the household, with or without severance pay; but even in the latter case, the financial repercussions for the serving girl's extended family would have been enormous. More dramatically but somewhat more fancifully, the pestilence-ridden peasants of the world inside Pantagruel's mouth (Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, ch. 32), who "meur[ent] . . . tant que le chariot court par les rues" (ch. 32; "die so fast . . . that the cart's always running about the streets" [Gargantua and Pantagruel, trans. J. M. Cohen [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955], 274), are being poisoned by the Utopian prince's bad breath—a byproduct of his own overconsumption to which the seemingly benign giant is totally oblivious.

³¹ See Cristiana Lardo, *I mostri dell'Orlando furioso: specchi della natura umana* (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 2010), 141–60.

sdruciolarne mille / . . . / tal contra Orlando l'empia turba cresce, / che giù da balze scende e di valli esce. / Fece morir diece persone e diece, / che senza ordine alcun gli andaro in mano" (24.9–10; "You could have seen a thousand men," says Ariosto, "armed with pikes and bows, spears, and slings, . . . coming down from the hills and out of the valleys against Orlando. / Out of that disorderly throng ten he killed, [. . .] and then another ten." (283).

In this passage we initially empathize with Orlando, the beleaguered nobleman, whom we have admired for 23 cantos. Ariosto reinforces our identification with the high-born hero by addressing (and perhaps implicating) his own "lord," Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, in Canto 24 ("Signor, ne l'altro canto io vi dicea . . . /," 24.4), persuading us as well as his patron to view the scene, and to commiserate with Count Anglante's degradation, through noble eyes. As Edward Saccone points out, however, "one of [Ariosto's] main teachings is to distrust appearances," even those that he himself has generated. "In fact reality in Ariosto almost never appears to be simple or monolithic," Saccone goes on to say. "It is always at least double, ambiguous or ambivalent."³²

As a result, the madness scene vacillates between two perspectives: that of the pathetic hero and that of the beleaguered peasants, who have no real defense against the onslaught of power and privilege. Initially, we hear the "din" (282) of Orlando's destructive furor through the ears of shepherds ("I pastor che *sentito* hanno il fracasso," 24.136), who come closer to *see* what has happened ("vi vengono a *veder* che cosa è questa," 23.136); and we view the madman's rampage through the herdsmen's frightened eyes ("viste del pazzo l'incredibil prove / . . . / si voltan per fuggir," 24.5) and from the vantage of neighboring farmers, who climb atop houses and churches to contemplate "l'orrenda furia" (24.7), or the horrendous fury. Just a few stanzas later, however, the narrator abruptly changes his and our perspective to coincide with that of Orlando, so that we hear the peasants' shouts and the shrill of their horns, trumpets, and clarions as hostile fanfare, much as the count does. Rather than sharing the workers' frightened gaze and identifying with their plight, moreover, as Ariosto persuaded us to do just a few verses earlier, readers momentarily "see" ("potreste . . . *veder* dai monti," 24.8) the approaching farmers and herdsmen as the "Other," as an "evil" ("empia," 24.9) army that is plotting a "villainous assault" ("villanesco assalto," 24.8) against Orlando—before Ariosto switches his perspective once again to reveal his hero's own villany.

³² However, what Ariosto offers us is not a simple, vertical equivalency between signifier and signified, where one peels away surface meaning to unveil what lies under it. Rather, the movement is from "one surface to another," says Saccone ("Wood, Garden, *Locus Amoenus*" [see note 9], 12), "that normally complements, modifies or corrects the preceding one."

In his journey through the looking glass of madness, the defender we admired has become an oppressor whom we deplore, the selfsame monster that his heroic double opposed. One is reminded again of Italo Calvino, but this time of his *Cloven Viscount*, where a brave knight, split in two by an enemy's blow, becomes two different people: a good man and his evil twin, more different from one another than Lindor and the Count in Beaumarchais's *Barber of Seville* and *Marriage of Figaro*.³³ The same is true of Orlando, whose mad incarnation is as cruel and destructive as his sane counterpart is courteous, well-intentioned, and reflective. Ariosto uses his hero's descent into madness to reflect critically on the joining of power and amorality: "un grand seigneur méchant homme," says Sganarelle, the complicit servant in Molière's *Dom Juan*, "est une terrible chose" (1.1; "A great lord who is a wicked man is a terrible thing").³⁴ This key insight about the dangers of power and privilege informs Ariosto's portrayal of local peasants, who cower, flee, or "stand far away" (284) when faced with Orlando's power and cruelty.

Even prior to his breakdown, interestingly enough, the hero has ceased to be a champion of the simple folk. In striking contrast to Angelica, who forgot that "ella fusse / figlia del maggior re ch'abbia il Levante" (23.120; "forgetting that she was daughter of the greatest monarch of the East," 280) while tending Medoro and sharing a herdsman's cottage, Orlando is repulsed by the simple house and the farmer with whom he finds lodging: "Quel letto, quella casa, quel pastore / immantinente in tant'odio gli casca, / che . . . piglia l'arme e il destriero, et esce fuore / per mezzo il bosco" (23.124; "The bed, the house, the herdsman filled him. . . with such revulsion [that] he fetched his arms and his steed and went out into . . . the wood," 281) to be alone. On the surface, the hero's distaste for the simple abode seems more psychological than sociological, stemming purely from his discovery that Angelica and Medor slept together under the peasant's roof. But there are hints throughout the episode that something else is afoot as well, as the paladin's strength increases in direct proportion to his frenzy. In the wake of his rampage, for instance, Orlando leaves the trees in such a state, says the narrator, "ch'ombra né gielo / a pastor mai non daran più, né a gregge" (23.130; "that never more would they afford cool shade to shepherd or flock," 281). In felling these "olmi vecchi" and "piante antiche" (23.135; "ancient elms," "age old timber," 280), the crazed hero of Christendom leaves an ecological footprint that will take decades, if not centuries, to repair.

This unconventional reading of Orlando's "gran follia" finds further support in Ariosto's use of rhetoric and symbols within the text. As deplorable as Orlando's violence toward trees, horses, and oxen may be, it is his slaughter of shepherds and sheep in particular—Golden Age symbols of innocence, non-violence, and the

³³ See Calvino, *The Nonexistent Knight and the Cloven Viscount* (see note 19), 143–246.

³⁴ Molière, *Tartuffe and Other Plays*, trans. Donald Frame (New York: Signet, 1967), 320.

responsible husbanding of natural resources—that draws our attention most forcefully to the plight of the peasants, causing us to see the count through their downtrodden, disempowered eyes. “Alcun’ pastor al suon trasse in quel lato / lor stella, o qualche lor grave peccato” (24.4; “Some shepherds were attracted to the noise,” says the narrator, “whether by their stars, or for some wicked misdeeds of theirs,” 283). If we initially sense that Ariosto is blaming the shepherds for their ultimate fate, what follows rapidly dispels that misperception: not only are the transgressions Orlando’s rather than theirs, but the ironic reference to their “misdeeds” evokes the fear of a servant before a capricious master, who attributes malfeasance to underlings where none exists, punishing them for phantom offenses. By the same token, the shepherd’s peaceable, nurturing control over his sheep figures a mode of governance diametrically opposed both to Orlando’s brand of power, and to the autocratic control of Machiavellian-style princes in Renaissance Italy.

Attributing sensitivity toward the lower classes to Ariosto, a member of the lesser nobility, may initially seem implausible.³⁵ Certainly the author expresses sympathy for the “poverhomini” or poor people of the province of Garfagnana, where he served as governor from 1520 to 1524, in his *Letters*.³⁶ Yet he also decries their internal feuds, petty thievery, and penchant for crime and violence, admitting that he would like to see four or five (“quattro o cinque che sono in questa provincia”) of them hanged.³⁷ Moreover, his utopian portrayal of Ferrara seems to suggest that the city state itself was a model of justice and humane governance, and that Ariosto himself, as a celebrated poet under the protection of the Este family, would have little familiarity, first-hand or otherwise, with the seigniorial oppression of peasants outlined in the madness scene. From a Gramscian perspective, however, Antonio Piromalli argues that the Estensi were masters of public relations rather than truly benevolent or fair-minded rulers, basing his analysis on the anonymous *Diario ferrarese* and other popular writings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

He notes that poverty, hunger, and disease were rampant among the under classes, at least during the Venetian War of 1482–1484 under the rule of Ercole I, while Ariosto was still a child; and that the dukes manipulated and exploited local peasants, tradesmen, and even the middle classes and lower ranking aristocrats

³⁵ As Gardner points out in his *King of Court Poets*, “on his imperial visit to Ferrara in 1469, Frederick III created [Ariosto’s father and the latter’s brothers] Counts of the Lateran Council and of the Holy Roman Empire” (6), a title that only Niccolò and one of his nephews seems to have actually used. In fact, “we have amusing evidence in the comedies of [Lodovico] that these lavishly bestowed titles of nobility were not—by him at least—taken seriously” (6).

³⁶ *Lettere*, ed. Angelo Stella (Milan: Mondadori, 1965), 297; cited by Giorgio Masi, “The Nightingale in a Cage’: Ariosto and the Este Court,” *Ariosto Today* (see note 19), 71–92; here 84.

³⁷ *Letters*, 297; cited by Masi, “The Nightingale” (see note 19), 84.

to fund their elaborate banquets, their colorful pageants and luxurious garments, their ambitious artistic and architectural projects, and their ongoing wars against Venice.³⁸ Piromalli's case may (or may not) be overstated, but a kernel of truth is almost certainly there. Indeed, Lopez and Miskimin contend that local rulers and townspeople in much of Renaissance Italy were essentially "hungry parasites feeding on the tribute of half-starved peasants" (414).

That Ariosto himself had ambivalent feelings toward his patrons is also abundantly clear, notwithstanding the encomiastic veneer of his official discourse. In his *Satires*, the author repeatedly asserts his independence, expresses his displeasure at being underappreciated and treated like a servant by his Este patrons, and voices his frustration at repercussions leveled against him for acting as a free agent.³⁹ Even in the *Orlando Furioso*, modern scholarship suggests that

³⁸ See Antonio Piromalli, *La cultura a Ferrara al tempo di Ludovico Ariosto*, 2nd ed. Biblioteca di cultura, 61 (1953; Rome: Bulzoni, 1975). Citing the *Diario Ferrarese dall'anno 1409 sino al 1502*, ed. Giuseppe Pardi (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1933), 75, Piromalli notes that "la guerra contro Venezia . . . non è voluta dal popolo e . . . procura una grande carestia tanto . . . che 'morino molte persone da fame et fu grante moria; et così havessimo focho, aqua, carastia, peste et guerra'" (26; "The people are against the Venetian War, which is causing a famine so severe that many citizens have died of hunger, and there is widespread pestilence; and thus we have fire, water, famine, plague, and war" [my translation]). Even though these conditions predated Ariosto's arrival in Ferrara, Piromalli notes pockets of discontent toward "la politica dispendiosa e dissipatrice" ("the lavish and wasteful politics") of the Estensi throughout the period: "Non mancarono sentimenti motivati di opposizione dichiarata alla politica e alla dinastia degli Estensi e si espressero come fu possibile, con gesti isolate di ribellione o con forme di sobillazione fino al 'bollettino' e al 'bischizo' in rima . . . [E]sistevano insomma in determinate strati del popolo e di altre classi sociali sentimenti di libertà, di pace e di avversione all'egemonia della casa dominante" (28; "There was no lack of opposition directed at the Estense dynasty and their politics, which was expressed in the only way possible, through isolated gestures of rebellion and incendiary pamphlets and satirical verses . . . In short, a sense of freedom, as well as anti-war sentiments and an aversion to the ruling class's hegemony, existed in certain strata among the people and other classes of society " [my translation]).

³⁹ See, for example, Ariosto's First Satire, written just after his refusal in October, 1517 to accompany Cardinal Ippolito d'Este to Hungary. In this epistle, which the poet addresses to his brother Alessandro and to his friend Ludovico da Bagno, both of whom followed Ippolito to Hungary, Ariosto wonders if the cardinal continues to malign him and whether any of his friends have had the courage to defend him publicly:

Io desidero intendere da voi,
Alessandro fratel, compare mio Bagno,
s'in corte è ricordanza più di noi;
se più il signor me accusa; se compagno
per me si lieva e dice la cagione
per che, partendo gli altri, io qui rimagno;
o, tutti dotti ne la adulazione
(l'arte che più tra noi si studia e cole),
l'aiutate a biasmarne oltra ragione.
Pazzo chi al suo signor contraddir vole,

Ariosto's panegyrics are double-edged, beginning with the ironic suggestion that his debt to Ippolito is so small that he can repay it with words and ink ("Quel ch'io vi debbo, posso di parole / pagare in parte e d'opera d'inchostro," 1.3),⁴⁰ and continuing with his revelation that poets routinely lie to please their patrons, an assertion that undermines his own panegyrics: "Non sì pietoso Enea, né forte Achille / fu, come è fama, né sì fiero Ettore; / . . . / ma i donati palazzi e le gran ville / dai descendentì lor, gli ha fatto porre / in questi senza fin sublimi onori / da l'onorate man degli scrittori" (35.25; "Aeneas was not as devoted, nor Achilles as strong, nor Hector as ferocious as their reputations suggest . . . What has brought them their sublime renown have been the writers honored with gifts of palaces and great estates donated by these heroes' descendants," 425). Ariosto's implicit admission that his own encomium is vacuous and that he flatters his patrons for material gain finds support in his extended comparisons of Ippolito to equivocal literary and historical figures (for example, Hyppolitus, Phaeton, and Nero) and in the questions he raises about the dynasty's legitimacy.⁴¹

se ben dicesse ch'ha veduto il giorno
pieno di stelle e a mezzanotte il sole.

. . .

Ditegli [al signore] che più tosto ch'esser servo
Torrò la povertade in pazienza.

(Satire I, 1–12, 245–46; pp. 1119, 1125)

[I wish to hear from you,
brother Alessandro and my friend Bagno,
if at court we are still remembered;
if our lord still accuses me; if any friend
stands up for me and explains the reason
that I remained here, when others left;
or if, learned in the skills of adulation
(the art that is most studied and cultivated among us),
you help him blame me unjustly.
He who contradicts his lord is mad,
even if his master says he has seen the day
full of stars and the sun at midnight.
. . .

Tell (Ippolito) that rather than being a servant
I will take poverty and bear it patiently. (My translation)]

⁴⁰ Numerous scholars have noted the ambiguous implications of this pseudo-encomiastic invocation, including Mario Apollonio and Pio Fontana, ed., in Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1971), 47; and Chesney, *The Countervoyage* (see note 11), 111 ("When the poet offers words and ink in exchange for Ippolito's services, the implicit nothing-for-nothing equation undermines the entire patronage system").

⁴¹ See Albert Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 219, 275, 341, 381–89, and 392, for an in-depth analysis of Ariosto's criticism of Ippolito d'Este. Nero, for example, is the "ravager of his homeland, murderer of literati such as Seneca and Lucan" (382), while "the name 'Ippolito' carries openly, etymologically, the meaning of 'loosed or unreined horse' (fitting epithet and epitaph for a master

What arguably remains, after we excavate beneath the layers of hollow, stylized praise, are veiled echoes of injustices that Ariosto himself experienced at the hands of capricious masters; memories of his own financial hardship following the death of his father, when the lot of caring for nine siblings fell to him, the eldest child; and profound ambivalence about Estense policies and practices, which led to an unprecedented flowering of the arts, on the one hand, and to widespread corruption, sycophancy, and abuses of power, on the other. In addition to the literary traditions that he invokes in "la gran follia," then, ranging from Homer's depiction of Ajax to Chrétien de Troyes's portrayal of Yvain's "wild man" episode, the scene also bears the imprint of his personal experiences, observations, and reflections. And from this perspective, the question of whether Ariosto could identify with the beleaguered peasants in cantos 23 and 24 seems moot: as a provincial "servo" who suffered injustices of his own, he could, and he did, understand the country folk's fear and resentment.

Indeed, the personality trait that prevented Ariosto from being a successful lord in his own right, he contended, was his surfeit of compassion ("ho troppo pietà [Masi, 84]) and self-identification with his subjects; and while Orlando's rural and disempowered victims may defend themselves with "spuntoni et archi e spiedi e frombe" (24.8; "pikes and bows, spears, and slings," 283), rather than with the "words and ink" (1.3) that are the tools of Ariosto's own trade, they are ultimately kindred spirits who work hard, take care of their own, and cultivate the resources allotted to them.

If Orlando doubles as a chivalric hero and cruel nobleman, arguably he is also, by virtue of his association with humanistic culture, the paradoxical personification of civilization's encroachment on, and destruction of, natural resources. Given his diet of acorns, a trope associated with the Golden Age myth in Renaissance literature, this reading clashes with our initial readings of the scene, where Orlando appears to be the "natural man"—not precisely innocent, like shepherds in pastoral narratives, but certainly not corrupt. In fact, the acorns he consumes traditionally figure the simple desires, absence of greed, and barter economies of pre-market societies. If we trace these acorns back to their source in Canto 23, however, a completely different interpretation superimposes itself on

of horses destroyed by his own steeds)" (385); and Phaeton, also associated with unruly horses, fell to his death "from an ungoverned chariot" (384). Ippolito was also reputed to be an unappreciative reader of the *Orlando Furioso*, whose dismissal of Ariosto's masterwork as "utter nonsense ('tante coglionerie, Messer Ludovico')" (389) would become legendary. Finally, Ascoli tackles "the question of the legitimacy of Estense rule, which should separate them from the dangerously extralegal illegitimacy of the tyrant. That legitimacy depends . . . on the legitimacy of Ruggiero as family founder. [This] myth of origins . . . is . . . a way of building up the poet's patrons for a fall—mocking their authority by tying it to a transparently fictional genealogy, to a little knight who never was" (219–20).

Ariosto's surface allusions to the Golden Age myth. For in addition to uprooting pine, elm, beach, and ash trees in his initial frenzy, Orlando also tears oaks from the ground, likely the selfsame trees whose fruit he later gathers for sustenance.

Not only does he pollute the stream with their detritus, but he also curtails the trees' productivity and devastates the ecosystem by eliminating them, at once reducing a key source of flour for the local population and depriving local wildlife of a staple in their diet.

Admittedly, Ariosto himself says nothing about the ecological ramifications of Orlando's rampage in his narrative, and we run the risk of imposing an anachronistic interpretation on his text by subjecting it to modern eco-criticism: "Conservationist philosophy, in the sense of preserving nature, is a modern concept," points out J. V. Thirgood.⁴² Yet within the context of uprooted oaks, Orlando's diet of acorns is almost certainly ironic, reminding us that the nobleman has not only destroyed the trees, but also consumed their fruit and devoured other species, notably bears and boars (24.13; "orsi e . . . cingiai") that draw their sustenance from acorns. In this sense, he has felled not only the Tree of Knowledge but the Tree of Life as well, disrupting natural cycles and the interconnectedness of all flora and fauna—surely an act of madness.

Given Ariosto's fulsome praise of cultural progress in Renaissance Ferrara, it may seem unlikely that he would use Orlando's madness to critique humankind's over-consumption of natural resources, our decimation of forests to construct furniture and till the soil, and our destruction of native habitats to satisfy our own hunger. Indeed, on two occasions (3.48; 43.61) the Ferrarese poet praises past and previous rulers of Ferrara for constructing a thriving city and court atop uninhabitable marshland. Ercole d'Este will make "campi fertilissimi" (3.48; "fertile fields," 26) from "le paludi" or swamps, prophesies Melissa, and then build "muro e fossa" (3.48; "walls and trenches," 26) to protect his people. In addition to its "argini" and "mura" (43.59; "dykes" and "walls," 515), Ferrara will also boast "lieti e pieni campi di ricchezza" (43.61; "cheerful, opulent fields," 516), "piante . . . d'ogni sorte rara" (43.58; "plants of every species," 515) and "tante spezie d'animali" (43.58; "as many kinds of animal as exist," 515), marvels Rinaldo, reaffirming the value of life forms that his demented cousin Orlando destroyed. Upon the marshland, he goes on to say, the Estensi will foster "tutti i liberali e degni studi" (43.60; "every humane study," 516); and he hopes, but does not promise, that they will use their "senno" and "iustizia" (43.62; "wisdom and justice," 516) to promote peace, abundance, and happiness ("con pace . . . ti tenga in abbondanza et in letizia," 43.62) among their people.

⁴² J. V. Thirgood, *Man and the Mediterranean Forest: A History of Resource Depletion* (London and New York: Academic Press, 1981), 29.

While this utopian paradise that Ariosto depicts is not entirely rural, but rather an artful blend of city and country, his discourse and his vision are unabashedly ecological, at least in a limited sense: admittedly, the poet has no interest in preserving the natural swampland upon which Ferrara was built, but he does advocate (re)forestation (or at least controlled new plant growth) and the (re)introduction of animal populations into the Po delta habitat, as well as aggressive flood control and peaceful conditions that keep marauding armies at bay, in order to protect these preserves and the people who cultivate them. Given the frequent floodwaters that threatened towns and villages in the area, the widespread deforestation that resulted from war and over-cultivation, and the sophisticated geological engineering required to make Ferrara's marshlands habitable, in fact, residents of northeastern Italy were particularly accustomed to thinking environmentally, at least within an economic context.

Their livelihoods and their very survival were contingent upon their ability to plan for natural disasters, understand their environment, and respond to its challenges. In addition to draining swamps to limit the incidence of water-borne disease, and to increase the acreage of arable land, they had begun to rotate crops and leave fields fallow to maximize agricultural productivity by the time of the Renaissance. Ariosto seems to take this ecological perspective one step further in the *Orlando Furioso*, however, as he portrays the shifts of Ferrara's topography, flora, and fauna over time; reflects critically on the squandering of natural resources and devastation of the ecosystem in Orlando's madness scene; and advocates the restoration of environmental harmony, and the creation of a thriving bionetwork where a wasteland once existed, in the utopian "future" of Ferrara. From a structural perspective, in fact, it seems clear that Ariosto intended us to interpret his protagonist's "gran follia" and his decimation of rural space within this context: for Orlando's madness scene, an anti-model of environmental stewardship located at the exact center of the poem, is sandwiched between two symmetrical "bookends"—one in canto 3 and the other in canto 43, three cantos from the conclusion—that stand as hortatory models of how best to "cultivate one's garden."

As both the *Orlando Furioso* and *Satires* have shown us, Ariosto's praise of Renaissance culture and his encomium of the Este rulers in no way preclude acerbic jabs at his patrons; and clearly the opposite is true as well. For rather than simply criticizing their abuses of power, the poet urges Ippolito and Astolfo d'Este to make his utopian vision a reality by building upon positive achievements that he outlines in his paradoxical encomia; and by ensuring that their well-publicized Golden Age, so often extolled by writers of the period, truly achieves the idyllic promise of its name—not just through the accumulation of material wealth in a courtly or urban setting, but through a concerted effort to combine their city-

building ambitions with a return to the justice, arcadian innocence, communal sharing, and natural harmony invoked by Hesiod.⁴³

This social and environmental ideal is a far cry from the flawed world that Ariosto describes in his *Satires*, however. As a proponent of *mediocritas* (“mediocre forma / sempre lodai, sempre dannai le estreme,” *Sat.* 5, 170–71), he reflects at length on the wasteful overconsumption of natural and material resources by his privileged contemporaries.⁴⁴ In addition to mocking their extravagance (“Quante collane, quante cappe nuove / per dignità si comprano,” 3.271–72; “What a lot of necklaces and new cloaks they buy for the sake of dignity” [my translation]), which is ultimately no less wasteful than Orlando’s useless uprooted trees, Ariosto argues that our wants and levels of consumption should be proportional to our needs: if a man has food to ease his hunger (“che non digiuni quando virra trarse / l’ingorada fame,” *Sat.* 3, 247–48), he claims, as well as warm shelter and a roof over his head (“abbia fuoco e tetto / se dal freddo o dal sol vuol ripararse,” *Sat.* 3, 248–49), what more can he possibly want or need (“che me può dare più di questo” *Sat.* 3, 253–54)? To exceed these limits, he implies, is both immoral and irrational.

Ultimately, both the historical record and the poet’s own writings lend support to the interpretation of Orlando’s madness outlined above, suggesting that Ariosto embedded both ecological insights and an allegory about seigniorial oppression into his protagonist’s decimation of the rural landscape and his massacre of shepherds, farmers, and livestock in cantos 23 and 24. That the poet was critical of the Este family and of Ippolito in particular is no secret; but in our haste to add a new piece to this interpretive puzzle, we must not forget that Ariosto had completed most of the madness scene by 1516, well before his break with the cardinal. In one sense, however, this fact strengthens rather than weakens our hypothesis, by minimizing the likelihood that Ariosto’s powerful portrayal of environmental destruction and aristocratic oppression stemmed from petty vindictiveness over his own fall from favor.

What we discover instead in his protagonist’s “rural rampage” is concern for the *res publica*, musings about the destructiveness of war and environmental waste, and a surprising sensitivity to the plight of the lower classes—precipitated in part

⁴³ See Hesiod, *The Works and Days*, in *The Online Medieval and Classical Library*, 11.109–26 (<http://omacl.org/Hesiod/works.html> [last accessed on September 30, 2011]).

⁴⁴ See Goldthwaite, “The Economy of Renaissance Italy” (see note 28), 15: “If any distinctive economic activity marks the period, it is conspicuous consumption. The increased production of art, and of luxury goods in general, is one of the most characteristic features of the Renaissance; and indeed it is at this time that art created consciously as such emerges as a distinct category of goods.”

by Ariosto's own self-identification as a "servo," and in part by his observations of injustices around him.

While there is no record of peasant uprisings in Ferrara after the fourteenth century, history tells us that poverty and a growing gap between the rich and the poor were rampant throughout Italy in the 1500s as well. Masters of public relations, the Estensi certainly supported alms for the poor and public works; yet their expenditures for war, lavish living, the purchase of *objets d'art*, extravagant pageants and sumptuous banquets, and the upkeep of famous writers and artists took their toll on the ducal treasury, which was more heavily invested in keeping up appearances and fostering humanistic scholarship than in redistributing wealth.

Like other humanists who profited from courtly extravagance and their princes' patronage of the arts, Ariosto clearly had mixed feelings about the lure of high culture, on the one hand, and rural life, on the other: and while he praises the Este family's innovations and the brilliance of their court, he also yearned at times for a simpler, bucolic life, and for the liberty to speak his mind honestly. This conflict informs Orlando's madness scene and, indeed, the entire *Furioso*.

Finally, for those who might object that our interpretation is too serious or too political for a scene that is fundamentally comic and escapist, let us note that Ariosto thrives upon paradoxes, which permeate his hybrid work from start to finish. He routinely includes real-world details in his fantasy, shifts perspectives in a way that turns scenes and moral issues upside down and inside out, and laces his encomia with satire. While Ariosto is clearly reflecting on the ecological and human damage that Orlando has wrought in his "gran follia," however, we have no concrete evidence that he is blaming the real-world decimation of natural resources on the upper classes, and on their tendency to bite—or, indeed, amputate—the hand that feeds them. What we do see in Orlando is an old-school hero whose rampage very nearly cripples the future.

From this perspective, it is no coincidence that Ariosto downstages his hero's anachronistic storyline at the poem's conclusion, supplanting his conflicted medieval ethos with the forward-looking marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero, ancestors of the Este dynasty, and its promise of a better tomorrow. Whether they fulfilled—or we ourselves can deliver on—this promise remains a question for the ages.

Chapter 24

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Representations of the Plowman and the Prostitute in Puritan and Anti-Puritan Satire: Or the Rhetoric of Plainness and the Reformation of the Popular in the Harvey Nashe Quarrel

In Elizabethan literature, the court and the country often did not define actual places or populations. In fact, depictions of the courtier and the rustic were frequently literary constructions that represented rhetorical stances and their ideological positions. This is apparent in a popular sixteenth-century battle between Puritans and popular writers over the aesthetics of popular art. This literary flitting, known as the Harvey Nashe Quarrel (1579–1596), primarily involved the Puritans Gabriel Harvey, Gabriel's brother Richard, and his student Edmund Spenser on one side and the popular writers Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, John Lyly, and, later, Ben Jonson on the other. The quarrel began with Spenser's publication of *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579). In *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser attempted to appropriate the popularity of vernacular and colloquial literature along with "the extraordinary power of the plowman conceit during [the] age of . . . reform" in order to make of himself a populist poet laureate, an "English Virgil."¹ Through the publication of a new genre of pastoral, based on classical sources and the rhetoric of Puritan schoolmasters, like Peter Ramus, Spenser attempted to purge popular culture of its carnivalesque disorder, just as earlier reformers had purged religion of its abuses.²

¹ Albert Charles Hamilton *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 717.

² Abraham Fraunce, in fact, wrote one of his manuals on Ramist rhetoric, *The Shepherdes Logike*

Gabriel Harvey's *Three Witty and Familiar Letters* (1580) exacerbated Spenser's assault on popular culture and drew the wrath of popular writers. Harvey attempted to create anew the aesthetics of popular art by constructing an opposition in terms of gender between representations of the plowman as a masculine voice of the people and representation of popular artists as effeminizing purveyors of feminine deception and sensuality. His letters to and from Spenser denigrated the style of popular writers, such as Greene and Lyly, by associating their style with the garb of courtiers. Harvey maligned their works as "womanish," characterized by apish and grotesque "oyster Ruffs" and "unkodpeased," or unmanly, "halfe hose."³ Harvey, instead, promoted a rhetoric of plainness and simplicity and created a virile fighting image of masculinity out of the pious plowman. As Harvey asserted, he came in to print "to defend himself, manfully, at the paper-bar" against the rural figure "Robin Good-fellow" (one of Robert Greene's pen names).⁴ He did so, he claimed, to protect the institutions of learning and art from the "encroaching pock" of the popular writers and their "curtisan schoole."⁵ His latter attacks on Greene, in fact, suggest he was as envious as he was outraged that Greene's popularity was greater than Spenser's. In his *Four Letters* (1592) he laments that, "the Countesse of Pembrookes Arcadia is not greene enough for quesasie stomackes," but the masses had to have "*Greenes Arcadia* and [he] beleeves most eagerly longed for *Greenes Faerie Queene*."⁶

While depicting popular writers as Robin Hood figures and courtesans, both the Harveys and Spenser portrayed themselves as rural plowmen, when, in fact, judging by Gabriel Harvey's letter to Spenser (1580), Gabriel and Spenser were plotting their advancement at court. Rather than representing real figures from the court or country, the Harveys' representation of popular writers as courtiers forged parallels between the courtiers' traditional qualities of luxuriant abundance and duplicity, and popular writers' effeminizing theatricality and grotesque sensual abundance in art.⁷ The style of popular writers they characterized as a

demonstrating Ramists' method through Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*. Mary McCormick, "A Critical Edition of Abraham Fraunce's *Shepherd's Logike*" and Two General Discourses," Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University 1968. John King, *English Reformation Literature: Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 22. Also see Mike Rodman Jones, *Radical Pastoral, 1381–1594: Appropriation and the Writing of Religious Controversy* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

³ Gabriel Harvey, *Three proper wittie familiar Letters, lately passed between two University men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our English reformed Versifying*. 1580. *The Works of Gabriel Harvey* for the first time collected and edited, with memorial-introduction, notes and illustration, etc., ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart. 3 vols. The Huth Library (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 1:84.

⁴ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*. 1596. in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey* (see note 3) 2:52–53.
⁵ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:52.

⁶ Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey* (see note 3), 1:22.

⁷ As Patricia Parker claims, and Harvey's association of "whor[ish] tales" with "*cornu copiae*"

carnal “cornu copiae.” Gabriel claimed this copious style had produced “whoreson tales of a tub” and that popular writers, whom both Gabriel and Richard associated with the courtiers’ coat of double “piled velvet,” were “sophisters . . . a generation of curroption. . . whore[s] of Babylon,” “butter-whores,” and “oyster-whore[s].” By contrast the Harvey’s and Spenser linked their own literary style with the “sheeps russet coate” of the plowman. The Harveys claimed to fear the corruption of the “wool,” of common sense, and their “plain speeches” by these “curtisans.”⁸

Popular writers, on the other hand, especially Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe, strategically wrote pamphlets to undermine the association of the Puritan with the Plowman, while embracing the designations of themselves as representatives of the feminine grotesque in popular art. The grotesque they tied to expressions of the carnal, the uproarious, and the unbridled in carnivalesque culture, and yet, they also often completely inverted the oppositions created by these Puritan rhetoricians. Greene’s *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, for example, created links between Puritans and courtiers that suggested that Gabriel Harvey, a Puritan schoolmaster and the ringleader of this reform of the popular, was the true courtier. In *Quip* Harvey is the courtier character Velvet Breeches. Moreover, Greene points to the artificiality of academics and the uncharitable economic practices associated with the rising Puritan urban class, in *Quip*, in order to suggest the courtier practice of economic fraud as consistent with Puritan ideology.

Likewise, Thomas Nashe echoes Greene’s accusations in *Pierce Penniless* and suggests that the revelation of corruption and injustice, associated with Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, is an attribute of artists like himself, who reveal the fraudulent reform practiced by falsely pious Puritans, who hypocritically attempted to adapt the voice of popular culture to their own cause while claiming to reform it.

confirms, linguistic copia was associated, in the early modern period, with an aberrant feminine sexuality that threatened masculinity. The theatrical was likewise a threat to masculinity; as the writing of Stephen Gosson attests, it “effeminated” the mind. Patricia A. Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), 8–35. Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse* (1579) (London: The Shakespeare Society, 1841), 19.

⁸ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:52, 232–33, 343. Richard Harvey, Plain Perceval the Peace-maker in England Sweetly Indeavoring with his Blunt Persuasions to Botch Up a Reconciliation Between Mar-ton and Mar-tother (1590). (Early English Books Online), 12. While it may seem that Harvey is writing only in opposition to popular culture, in fact, his publication of the *Three Letters* reveals that he is rather reform minded than against the popular as such. He writes to Spenser to “send. . . some odde fresh pauling threehalfepennie Pamphlet. . . or some Baldunctum Tragicall Ballet in Ryme, and without Reason,” and he wishes that “some learned, and well advised University man, woulde undertake the matter, and bestow some paynes in deede upon [this] famous . . . materiall.” Harvey, *Three Letters in The Works of Gabriel Harvey* (see note 3), 1:62.

Suggesting *Pierce Penniless* (1592) as the original source for Harvey's appropriation of the identity of the plowman in *Pierces Supererogation* (1596), for example, Nashe points to the hypocrisy of Harvey's becoming a popular writer by associating with rather than reforming Nashe's writing. He claims Harvey, "takes a new lesson of Plutarch, in making benefit of his enemies & borrows . . . the name of Piers Penniless (one of my Bookes), which he knew to be most saleble, (passing through sixe Impressions,) to help his bedred stuffe to limp out of Powles Churchyard."⁹ In other words, Harvey's writing would have been too feeble to leave the bookstalls if it were not for Harvey's association of himself with Nashe's red-blooded plowman identity.

Many of the popular writers involved in this battle over the aesthetic in popular art were courtiers, in the sense that they also were trying to advance at court, and none of these writers was a rural figure. What was significant in the writing of both popular writers and Puritans, therefore, was not actual plowmen or courtiers, but the ideology expressed in their representations of these figures. In fact, through the course of the Puritans' argument with popular writers, the term courtier is so obviously only a vehicle for their prejudice in art, regarding what they considered feminine disorder, that it quickly gives way to the representation of the popular writer solely as prostitute rather than as courtier. Therefore, this paper examines Puritan and popular ideology expressed through representations of the plowman and the prostitute. It does not look at actual courtiers, prostitutes, or plowmen, or other rural figures but at the Puritans, who, subscribing to an anti-carnavalesque bias in art, used the gendered opposition of the plowman and the courtier to reform what they conceived of as a sinful corporeal theatricality. It also examines the popular artists' counter attack, especially their defense of the carnivalesque. Through representations of the plowman and the prostitute, popular writers indict the Puritans' economic practices, lack of charity, and hypocrisy while revealing much about their own ideology concerning not just their personal artistic preferences but also the potential attack on intellectual liberty at stake in the Puritan construction of a "plain and simple" aesthetic sensibility.¹⁰

⁹ Thomas Nashe, *Have with You to Saffron Walden or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is Up* (1596), ed. Ronald Brunless Mckerrow. 5 vols. (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904), 3:35.

¹⁰ This study looks at the construction of aesthetic sensibility concerning the pastoral and so does not bind itself to any particular manifestation of this genre (i.e., poetry, prose, and drama) but rather examines the writings in the genre that are relative to the argument. The argument is that Puritans attempted to purge the carnivalesque pastoral of feminine disorder and that popular writers wrote to defend it, as it represented for them artistic liberty. Moreover, this essay traces the development of both the Puritan and the popular writers' aesthetic sense concerning the pastoral and its carnivalesque expressions through such debates as the anti-Ciceronian movement, the Marprelate affair, and the more general Puritan reform of Carnival in popular culture. It provides any necessary background information as the argument unfolds. For example, the Ramist ideology that influenced the Harvey's anti-Ciceronism, i.e., the anti-feminism that

As Patricia Parker has already observed, this battle between popular artists and Puritans was a long time coming. Earlier in the century, popular writers had become associated with a “corrupting and enervating” femininity that became a “preoccupation . . . of the schoolmaster.”¹¹ This femininity was associated with the Ciceronian or Asiatic style in literature, a verbal “copia” of voluptuous description and linguistic play. This effeminate style was also associated with youthful prodigality, youth being conceived as a period in one’s life of gender ambiguity marked with a lack of restraint. As Parker argues, this Ciceronian style had been contrasted by scholars, such as Lipsius and Erasmus of Rotterdam, with “the more virile Attic [style]” which was terse and therefore thought to be manly and disciplined. “Erasmus’s *Ciceronianus* (1528) speaks of seeking in vain in Ciceronian eloquence for something ‘masculine’ and of his own desire for a ‘more masculine style,’” while Lipsius claims no longer to like the Ciceronian or Asiatic Style: “I have become a man, and my tastes have changed. Asiatic feasts have ceased to please me; I prefer the Attic.”¹² The schoolmaster Ramus, in *Brutinae Quaestiones*, blames Cicero for making rhetoric the whore of wisdom rather than its “handmaid”; he adds that the softness of Cicero’s style is “scarcely adequate for a noble man,” and that he “spurn[s] and condemn[s] it as worthy of an unassuming woman”¹³ Ramus warns that “the lure of Asiatic exuberance rather than the critical judgment of Roman seriousness” is harmful.¹⁴ Moreover, like Lipsius, he associates Cicero’s style with a dangerous lack of restraint that, if practiced in youth, cannot later be overcome. He cautions that from early on Cicero was “steeped in Asiatic verbosity” and that because of this “he later found it impossible to restrain and check himself.”¹⁵ This gendered rhetoric (note its preoccupation with manly styles and styles worthy only of women in the above quotes) created an opposition between a “whor[ish]” copious and undisciplined use of language and a disciplined masculine style which appealed to Puritans. The Harveys and Spenser adapted this reformation of Ciceronian copia into their reformation of popular literature. The plain style, like the Attic, was characterized

prompted the Puritan reform of popular culture, is discussed in detail throughout the whole of the essay. Finally, this essay confines itself to Puritan and popular writers’ representations of masculine rural figures, such as the plowman, the yeoman, and the shepherd, and figures of feminine disorder, such as the courtier, the prostitute, and the shrew as they reflect Puritan and popular writers’ battle over the aesthetics of popular art through the genre of the pastoral. Finally, this essay was taken from chapter two of my dissertation entitled, “Grotesque Transformations and the Discourse of Conversion in Robert Greene’s *Work* and Shakespeare’s *Falstaff*.”

¹¹ Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* (see note 7), 11.

¹² Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* (see note 7), 14.

¹³ Petrus Ramus, James J. Murphy, and Carole Elizabeth Newlands, *Peter Ramus’s Attack on Cicero: Text and Translation of Ramus’s Brutinae Quaestiones* (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1992), 29–34.

¹⁴ Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* (see note 13), 29.

¹⁵ Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* (see note 13), 8.

by a disciplined lack of wordiness, a “manly” insistence on reason in art, and the rejection of corporeal pleasure, especially the overuse of metaphor. As Parker points out, rhetoricians have linked women with the “deceit [and] doubleness . . . of tropes.”¹⁶ The Harveys certainly condemned this linguistic playfulness in popular writers’ works, their use of puns and parody in carnivalesque satires, as well as the visual voluptuousness of their romances. Spenser, too, wrote to overturn this style.

In opposition to the Harveys’ Puritan artistic ideology, which subscribed to a “one-to-one ratio between word and thing,” popular artists’ use of puns as well as metaphors suggested an infinite regress of meaning and language’s participation in the creation of truth rather than its use as a vehicle for the expression of truth.¹⁷ This copia, or abundance of meaning and words, and the bodily pleasure it provoked was fraught with sexual implications for early modern Puritans and represented the sin of unrestrained appetite and the evil temptation of sensual delight.¹⁸ Spenser’s *Dame Excess*, as Parker points out, is an exemplary representation of these convictions, but so is Spenser’s *Duessa*. Spenser’s representation of *Duessa* reflects his ideology on writing; her abundance evokes the frighteningly repulsive feminine grotesque that overwhelms the construction of masculine identity and emphasizes the loathsomeness of the carnal in Ciceronian excess. Other authors in the period represented the grotesque feminine as comedic. For example, through the laughter provoking grotesquely feminine Falstaff and Hal’s equally funny copious descriptions of Falstaff, Shakespeare highlights the pleasure in the corporeal experience of abundance, especially in *Henry IV Part One*. Spenser’s suppression of this comic aspect of the grotesque suggests the fear of laughter that the grotesque provoked in those distrustful of unrestrained bodily reactions to this effeminizing art.¹⁹ In the Puritan battle with

¹⁶ Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* (see note 7), 111.

¹⁷ According to Sister Mary McCormick (a student of Walter Ong) in her critical edition of Abraham Fraunce’s *The Shepherd’s Logike*, Ramus insisted on a “one-to-one ratio between word and thing” in which case the slipping of the signifier and the signified in the construction of meaning that takes place in the use of puns would be troublesome to his ideology pointing as it does to the instability of language. Moreover, metaphor creates meaning by forging connections between things that appear to be unrelated, adding new ways of understanding and thereby threatening the view that language corresponds to a reality independent of the creative influence of language. Metaphor also confirms the polysemic nature of language that threatens the correspondence theory of language and reality (*The Shepherd’s Logike* [see note 2], 43).

¹⁸ Fraunce claims he writes *The Shepherd’s Logike* to facilitate Ramist logic and so “correct those who have . . . defaced the right use of liberal arts . . . or perverted good manners, as arts of loving, magike, quaffinge, with the rest of that heathenish rable.” Fraunce, *The Shepherd’s Logike* (see note 2), 58–59.

¹⁹ In the early modern period, laughter was understood as a semi-sexual experience, and the lack of control that it provoked in the body was suggestive of the dangerously weakening power Puritans associated with the feminine. According to Gail Kern Pastor, Laurent Joubert argues in

popular culture, the object against which the Puritan author struggles is “this temptress,” the temptress being in this case, according to Parker, the “dilated body of the text” or the “ensnarement of Created Pleasure.”²⁰ The popular artist, as well as the feminine grotesque in popular art, represented this disordered female in the Puritans’ battle with sinful art, and thus became not only objects of scorned fascination but also objects of reformation.

This battle between the Puritan and popular writer over the reform of popular art takes place through representations of gender in the pastoral genre, a popular and academic genre associated with the carnivalesque. In Spenser’s *Shepherd’s Calendar*, written almost a decade before the Marprelate affair (under the tutelage of Gabriel Harvey), Spenser constructed a puritanical masculine pastoral identity.²¹ The rural figures that had been associated variously in the carnivalesque pastoral tradition with the shepherd, the pious plowman, the rebel plowman, and even the licentious plow boys, Spenser subordinated under the character of the pious plowman plagued by love and so exiled from an ideal state of being.²² Replacing the shepherd of the popular carnivalesque pastoral (the often bawdy outlaw Robin Hood) with the Protestant tradition of the pious plowman, and identifying himself with this plowman, Spenser associated the shepherd with the Puritan cause and the Puritan cause with early reform.²³ However, as Albrecht Classen points out in

Traité du ris (1579) that “In laughter . . . our will to bodily control is overcome by a violent solicitation from the body below . . .” Furthermore, Pastor claims that “Laughter is for [for certain thinkers in the period] a bodily phenomenon that one ought to find astonishing . . . ‘who could not be amazed upon seeing the entire body thrown into motion and shaking with an indescribable stir for the pleasure of the soul.’” Gail Kern Pastor, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Discipline of Shame in Early Modern England*. (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 123, 124. See also the contributions to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

²⁰ Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* (see note 7), 9.

²¹ At the end of the 1580s, a group of anonymous Puritan authors, known as the “Martin Marprelate” writers, adapted the popular style of the carnivalesque stage clown and lampooned the prelacy through the publication of pamphlets that soon became extremely popular. Seeing the effectiveness of the Marprelate writers’ adaptation of this popular style, the bishops under attack hired Lyly, Nashe, and Greene, to answer these Puritan authors in a like manner, thus creating the Marprelate affair.

²² E. K. Chamber’s discussion of the wooing theme in plough plays and festivities reveals marked similarities between cultural association of the plowman and the shepherd in the pastourelle tradition, suggesting a shared motif between these rural figures which Spenser reinterprets in the *Shepherd’s Calendar*, reforming both the shepherd’s and the plowman’s merriment. See E.K. Chambers, *The English Folk-Play* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933).

²³ Lawrence Manley claims that “The medieval plowman who had in early Tudor complaint still represented the virtue of all members of a unitary estate of commoners was replaced . . . by the pastoral shepherd, whose very being was defined by a new opposition between rural husbandmen and urban merchants.” By the time of the *Shepherd’s Calendar*, the figure of the

the Introduction to the present volume, the original story of Piers Plowman, as used by Langland, had "portrayed through the lens of religious allegory . . . the social conditions of [Langland's] time, both in their concrete economic manifestations and in idealist terms."²⁴ Spenser's agenda is more moral and aesthetic than economic.²⁵ Casting himself and Gabriel Harvey as shepherds/plowmen, within the *Calender*, referring to himself as Colin Clout (Skelton's Piers figure) and Harvey as Hobbinell, Spenser highlights his and Harvey's roles as reformers of carnival rather than as economic reformers.²⁶ The plowman in the *Shepherd's Calender*, like the Puritans, speaks out against the May games and against the feminine disorder (here represented as love) that keeps the shepherd from a harmonious state of existence and threatens true art.²⁷ A decade later, the Harveys will draw from the *Calender* for their carnivalesque masculine identity in the Marprelate Affair. In *Pierces Supererogation* and in *Plain Perceval*, the Harveys use the identity of the plowman to attack the disorder of popular writers, emphasizing the virile fighting image of the plowman in their construction of masculinity and opposing this identity to that of popular writing; the latter they treat as representative of a disordered femininity (worse than "Long Meg of Westminster . . . or Maid Marian") that corrupts an otherwise moral society.²⁸

Spenser's attack on feminine disorder in the genre of the pastoral utilizes the elegiac convention to replace the grotesque female of a popular pastoral with a feminine identity as absence, presenting women who are either lost or completely out of reach: the dead Dido, the betraying Rosalind, and Queen Elizabeth. He does away with the popular feminine pastoral conventions associated with the figure of the plucky shepherdess of the May Games, ballads, and the *pastourelle* when he strips the pastoral of its comedy and bawdiness, such as that found in the witty

plowman associated Puritans with shepherds, perhaps allowing urban merchants to manipulate a rhetoric that appealed to the rural poor and so better negotiate that opposition. Greene and Nashe's parody of the Harvey's economic motives in using the voice of the shepherd/plowman, which I analyze later in this chapter, suggests as much. Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge, New York, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 75.

²⁴ See Albrecht Classen's Introduction to this volume ("Rural Space"), 74.

²⁵ Greene and Nashe's plowman counter-critique, with its blatant economic focus, by opposition draws attention to Spenser's primarily moral and aesthetic concerns, indicting Puritans as part of an emerging urban class, and suggesting Puritans' cultural reform as a mere screen for obscuring the predatory practices that popular writers threaten to uncover.

²⁶ According to Paul Alpers: "there is every reason to accept E. K.'s word that Colin Clout represents the poet . . . Spenser's contemporaries referred to him as 'Colin,' later in his career, Spenser unambiguously used the name of himself in Book VI of *The Faerie Queen*." Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 181.

²⁷ See Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (see note 26), 179, who claims, "Colin Clout is depicted as exiled by love from the world which he once shared with his fellows and to which Hobbinoll urges him to return."

²⁸ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 65.

and bawdy banter between shepherds vying for their love, or shepherdesses defeating their would-be lovers. These mirthful and celebratory songs of the shepherds and shepherdesses represented disorder in their linguistic playfulness. The shepherdess's banter was often funny, as in her witty banter with her would-be assailant knights or with her cherished lover, Robin Hood. It could also be erotic, as in the vivid descriptions of lovers and their suggestions of sexual acts, and often it was both when these elements were combined.

In response to this Puritan assault on the carnivalesque in art, Greene and Nashe embraced the grotesque feminine identity in all its sexual, comedic, and verbal disorder in the pamphlets *Menaphon* (1589), *A Disputation Between a He Cony-catcher and a She Cony-catcher* (1592), *Have with You to Saffron Waldon* (1596), and *Pierce Penniless* (1592). Celebrating the licentiousness of the disordered feminine in language, character, and content, Greene and Nashe wrote to defend pleasure in art and to uphold the freedom of the shepherd's popular ambiguous masculine identity. Their shepherd/plowman was associated in a positive way with feminine corporeality.

Although the battle over the reformation of the carnivalesque had begun between the Harveys, Spenser, and the popular writers at least as early as with Harvey's letters to Spenser, it was with the publishing of the more radical Puritan, Martin Marprelate (1588–1589), who was willing to use the comedic in popular writing to reach a larger audience, that the battle over the carnivalesque became particularly pronounced. Popular writers entered the Marprelate fray with a more open vehemence, outraged by the hypocrisy of Puritans writing in the genre they had so long opposed but also obviously relishing the ease by which they could now lampoon Puritan hypocrisy in the arts.

In *Pap Hatchet* (1589), Lyly, conflating the anti-Ciceronian Harveys and Spenser with Marprelate, reveals the hypocrisy of Puritans who condemned popular styles as copious, light, and vulgar and then used the same methods to appeal to a popular audience. Lyly cautions Martin:

to find fault with no broad terms, for I have measured yours with mine, & I find yours broader just by the list. Say not my speeches are light, for I have weighed yours and mine, and I find yours lighter by twenty grains than the allowance. For number you exceed, for you have thirtie ribauld words for my one . . .²⁹

Humorously weighing the difference between popular writers and the Marprelate writers, Lyly implies an incongruity in the Puritans' new style under the Harveys and Spenser. Countering the accusation of copiousness, his parodic measuring of art suggests that Puritans have been doing just that—preposterously measuring

²⁹ John Lyly, *Pappe with an Hatchet: Alias, a Figge for my God Sonne* (1589). *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. Richard Warwick Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 3:394.

art. Popular writers often condemned Puritans for having minds for business but not for art.³⁰ Lyly assumes their persona and determines that, in fact, the Puritans are now guiltier than he is of copiousness.

Lyly's mockery illuminates a critically important by-product of the quarrel over popular culture between popular artists and Puritans: the exaggerated presence in each others' writing of the opponents' style. This phenomenon has created critical confusion around the Marprelate affair and the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, making critics mistakenly attribute moral intentions to popular writers, such as Nashe and Greene, and a true spirit of Carnival to Puritans. Critics' misattribution has disrupted longstanding critical perceptions of the relationship of Puritans to the carnivalesque.

Scholars have long written about the Puritans' moral objections to popular culture in the late Tudor period. Peter Burke, in *Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, observes that such objections are well known and well documented.³¹ He discusses "Calvin's campaign against festivity in the 1570s," the "English Anglican," as opposed to "Puritan," sympathy "for festive tradition, and the "opposition of English Puritans to popular recreation."³² Keith Thomas, in his often quoted "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," claims that

The Puritan attack on holy days . . . [was] only part of this much wider movement to stamp out all those sources of entertainment which involved the temporary suspension or inversion of the social order.³³

Thomas's account of the Puritan attack on popular culture is confirmed in Jonas Barish's *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* and in E. K. Chambers' study of the Elizabethan stage. Though he does not distinguish between Puritans and Protestants, Mikhail Bakhtin remarks that the Protestants who objected to Carnival "deplored the joking and degrading use of sacred text in familiar verbal intercourse."³⁴

³⁰ See the preface by Sister Mary Martin McCormick in her critical edition of Abraham Fraunce's *Shepherd's Logike* (see note 2). The Puritan philosophy of Peter Ramus was very much preoccupied with balance and so the measuring of art and its practical application. In fact, Ramus seems to be measuring art in *Brutinae Quæstiones* when he complains of such things as the length of a period being "four cola." (see footnote 13), 131. Also, see Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd* in which Jonson's characters complain of Puritans' economic view of holiday celebrations. Ben Jonson, F.G. Waldron, and Peter Whalley. *The Sad Shepherd, or a Tale of Robin Hood a Fragment* (London: J. Nichols, 1783), 79.

³¹ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 219.

³² Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (see note 31), 300.

³³ Keith Thomas, "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," *The Times Literary Supplement* 21 (January 1977): 77–81; here 80.

³⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (1965; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 87.

More recently, however, a growing number of scholars (John King, Paul White, Grace Tiffany, Joseph Black and Kristen Poole) have begun to point out the seemingly contradictory evidence of the use of a carnivalesque style amongst supposedly Puritan authors after 1570. Pointing in particular to the Martin Marprelate writers, Richard and Gabriel Harvey, and even Steven Gosson and Philip Stubbs, these critics render problematic the work of earlier scholarship. Some have gone so far as to suggest an uninterrupted continuity between Elizabethan Puritans and their carnivalesque Protestant predecessors.³⁵ For example, they suggest that the inversion of hierarchy and the attempt to overthrow ecclesiastical authority by the rhetoric of the lowly layperson associated with the figure of Piers Plowman are instances of the carnivalesque in Puritan writing. Joseph Black writes that the Marprelate writers attempt to link this rhetoric to that of early reformers by appropriating the “plain speech” of the Ploughman tradition:

A 1592 Presbyterian petition attributed to Job Throkmorton defends Martin by allying him with an oppositional culture that reached back through Tyndale, Barnes, Hooper, and Hugh Latimer, to John Wycliffe, Piers Ploughman, and the pseudo-Chaucerian Ploughman’s Tale.³⁶

Job Throkmorton, of course, is thought to be one of the Martin Marprelate writers.

In fact, these scholars’ analysis of Puritan carnivalesque rhetoric in the Marprelate affair ought to include another carnivalesque figure, almost completely overlooked by critics, the feminine grotesque, or disorderly female. Whether figured as an oyster wife, oldwife, alewife, fishwife, or prostitute, her unruly “railing” voice is so intrinsically linked to the rhetoric of Carnival that her presence is more indicative of Carnival than is Piers’ “plain speech.” Like Piers, she represents in Puritan texts the inversion of hierarchy, signaling to those familiar with the carnivalesque the abused subordinate’s overthrow of an unjust authority.³⁷ An exemplary representation of this figure is Dame Lawson. In *The*

³⁵ See, for example, Kristen Pool, *Radical Religion From Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Grace Tiffany “Puritanism in Comic History: Destabilizing Hierarchy in the Henry Plays,” *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1998): 256–87; the introduction to *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: Modernized and Annotated Edition*, ed. Joseph Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) by Joseph Black; Paul Witfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and John King’s *English Reformation Literature* (see note 2).

³⁶ Martin Marprelate, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (see note 35), xxix.

³⁷ See, for example, Gretchen Mieszkowski’s discussion of the representations of feminine trickery as “undermining conventional power structures” in her essay “Old Age and Medieval Misogyny: The Old Woman” (299–319; here 312), and Karen Pratt’s observation, in “*De Vetula*: the Figure of the Old Woman in Medieval French Literature,” that this “gift for outwitting husbands and lovers, could also represent for some readers, a positive image of female intellectual

Epistle, Martin calls her “the shrew of Paul’s Gate”; she is not only an “enemy to all dumb dogs and tyrannical prelates in the land” but also so skillful in wit as to be able to put tyrannical prelates in their place.³⁸

Martin claims that she shut the bishop up when he threatened her with Bridewell, the women’s jail, by answering his charge with the remark that “she was an honest citizen’s wife, a man well known, and therefore bade his grace, an he would, send his Uncle Shorie thither.”³⁹ Martin adds to her reply the rhetorical flourish of laughter and lauds her prowess in putting down the bishop: “Ha ha ha: now, good your grace, you shall have small gains in meddling with Margaret Lawson.”⁴⁰ Martin’s mocking laughter and shifting familiarity with Dame Lawson (his calling her Margaret once she has put the bishop in his place) ally the power of the shrew’s colloquial voice with Martin’s own carnivalesque voice throughout these pamphlets. Like Martin’s colloquial attack on the bishops, her neighborly familiarity with the bishop’s “uncle Shorie” is what overturns the bishop’s authority.

However, though the more radical Puritans, the Marprelate writers, incorporated the figures of the plowman and the shrew into their texts, they were not advocates of a popular carnivalesque in general. The presence of Carnival in their writing was due to their attempt to transform the carnivalesque from what it had become in popular culture to something more beneficial to Puritanism and to take back a large, powerful audience: the masses. The Marprelate writers defended their adaptation of this style against the admonitions of their Puritan audience, claiming that “jesting is lawful by circumstance” and reassuring them that, at any rate, they never “profaned the word in any jest.”⁴¹ This suggests that Puritans in general were not proponents of the carnivalesque but that some were open to its possible transformation by appropriation. In fact, the Marprelate writers are transforming Carnival in their reassurance that the sacred word was never profaned by jest, for as Bakhtin reveals, in Carnival the sacred and profane cohabitate.⁴²

The Marprelate writers’ use of the carnivalesque provoked the wrath of both popular writers and the Harvey brothers—their Puritan allies in the adaptation of the carnivalesque to a Puritan ideology. For the Harveys, Marprelate’s reforming of the church was as important as the Harveys’ reforming of the carnivalesque. It

superiority (321–42; here 341).” Both essays appeared in *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007).

³⁸ Marprelate, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (see note 35), 13.

³⁹ Marprelate, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (see note 35), 13.

⁴⁰ Marprelate, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (see note 35), 14.

⁴¹ Marprelate, *The Marprelate Tracts* (see note 35), 115.

⁴² See Bakhtin, *Rabelais* (see note 34), 285.

was not enough that the sacred word was not profaned by jest. Jest, itself, and female disorder were the primary targets of the Harveys' reform.⁴³ On the other side of the controversy, the Marprelate authors offended popular writers by hypocritically posturing as their adversaries. The popular writers retaliated with anti-Marprelate pamphlets, like *Pap Hatchet*, but it is with their true adversaries' entrance into the fray—the Harvey brothers—that the real battle over the carnivalesque commenced.

In *Plain Perceval* (1590), Richard Harvey reveals, through a veiled allusion to Ramism, how great a part the schoolmasters' ideology was playing in the universities of England and how great a role it would play in their own reformation of the carnivalesque.

When the steel and the flint be knocked together, a man may light a match by the sparkle: surely but I think tender be verie dank now adais and though light by leisure: for there hath been striking and jarring ever since . . . a learned man somewhat on thy side, Martin, seemed to persuade that contention for good matters was good. I have seen them, which have seen such hurly burlies about a couple . . . Aristotle & Ramus . . . such a quoile with *pro* and *contra* such begging ergoes, til they have gone fro Art together by the ears, & made their conclusions end with a clunch-fist, fight . . . like those children which sitting in the chimney corner, some at one side some at another, with the fire in the middle; fell to it with firebrands, when they should have but warmed themselves and away . . . one little house of dessention, is able to set a whole house, a towne, an universitie, a citie, a whole Realme on fire.⁴⁴

By echoing the evangelicalism of early protestant martyrs in this veiled allusion to the controversy of Ramists' rhetoric in the universities, the Harveys were reassuring Martin that they were carrying on the light of Martin's argument if not his style through a reformation of art that purged literature of feminine corruption in the vein of Ramus's anti-Ciceronianism. Ramus, and many other schoolmasters, as Parker shows, were responsible for a more vehement anti-Ciceronian movement (really an anti-grotesque femininity movement) that the Harveys would champion in their war with popular writers. These schoolmasters introduced the Puritan "plain style" in prose, a style colloquial but not grotesque.⁴⁵

⁴³ Although the target of Harvey's reform are not actual women but representations of female disorder by men, Pamela Brown suggests that there were concrete threats of female insubordination in actual women joking and composing "mocking verse" and "inversionary humor [that] could extend far beyond the holiday pleasure of 'women on top' into day-to-day life . . ." in the period, which may have contributed to the anxiety of schoolmasters like Harvey and their desire to silence even the representation of such disorder. Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew Than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 82.

⁴⁴ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 20.

⁴⁵ In fact, Parker attributes an anti-Ciceronism to Ascham that is really more fitting for Ramus,

The colloquial style that had been adapted by the Marprelate writers alluded to this Ramists' plain style but its grotesque humor, as in the figure of Dame Lawson, was in need of a further reformation, as was the popular carnivalesque writing of the anti-Marprelate writers. Harvey's mentioning of the feud in the universities involving Aristotelians (Ciceronians) versus Ramists was a well-known allusion to the controversy surrounding the reformation of the arts and the continued acceptance of traditional philosophy at the universities that involved Nashe and Greene, on one side, opposed to Ramism, and both the Harvey brothers, on the other, who lectured and published in support of Ramism.⁴⁶

Through his use of the rhetoric of the Reformation, Richard Harvey suggested his reformation of the arts as one all Protestants should embrace. His representation of a light of dissention that is able to set a house, city, and realm on fire and, especially, his repeated use of the word "light," echoes the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:14–16). Protestant evangelists, according to John King, the editor of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, took this passage as a scriptural prediction of the Protestant Reformation,

Ye are the light of the worlde. A citie that is set on a hill, cannot be hid. Nether do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candle stick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

whose more vehement attack on the feminine copiousness of Cicero actually provoked Ascham's defense of Cicero in the *Schoolmaster*. Nevertheless, for all of these schoolmasters, even Ascham, grotesque femininity and its copiousness were clearly a problem. As Walter Ong points out, Ramus provided a "business stress on rhetoric" that appealed to Puritan schoolmasters and Calvinists in general. Moreover, he contributed to the plain style against which Ciceronians wrote. According to Ong, a "patristic and medieval love of ornateness" produced "the lushness met among many writers more or less of the episcopal party" in the seventeenth century. Walter J. Ong, "Tudor Writing on Rhetoric," *Studies in the Renaissance* 15 (1968): 36–69; here 64, 67.

⁴⁶ Ramism consisted of "a definite set of philosophical and literary attitudes derived from the Paris arts professor . . . Peter . . . Ramus." This essay is concerned with the "literary attitudes" of Ramus which are expressed in the anti-Ciceronian movement and the promotion of the plain style discussed in more depth earlier in this essay above. According to Ong, "there [was] a considerable reading of Ramist works by students . . . and a good deal of shouting for and against Ramism by sophisters or other youthful university disputants, who are echoed and improved by Robert Greene, Nashe, and the Harveys." Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3, 303. Robert Greene and Nashe represent the 'sophists' side of course. See also Nashe's reference to this controversy in *The Anatomy*, Gabriel Harvey's *Ciceronianus* and Richard Harvey's *Ephemeron*, *sive Paean, in gratiam perpurgatae reformatque dialecticae* (1583). Also see Ong, "Tudor Writing on Rhetoric," in which Aristotelians are referred to as Ciceronians (see note 45), 66.

King adds that Foxe alludes to the same scripture in his “artistic embellishment” of the conversation between the martyrs Latimer and Ridley that was reported to have taken place just before they were to be burned. Latimer says to Ridley: “Be of good cheer, Ridley; and play the man. We shall this day, by God’s grace, light up such a candle in England as I trust will never be put out.”⁴⁷ The Harvey brothers’ use of this rhetoric suggests the fervor with which they approached their reformation of the carnivalesque and their hope of extending an acceptance of their artistic ideology among all Protestants.

In their reformation, the Harvey brothers believed that the Marprelate writers did not go far enough. They may have introduced the plain style in their use of the colloquial, but they had yet to purge fully their artistic language of the criminality of “feminine” excess and duplicity, to completely “play the man,” as they variously took on the voice of the scold as well as the plowman. Richard claims that Martin’s style, like that of popular writers, is feminine and contagious: “When [Martin] began to skold first, you should have betooke him to an ostler, to walke, while you had cald an officer to chamber his tong. So if you had done, his own poison would have festered in his own flesh.”⁴⁸ The Harveys evoke the image of the shrew in describing Martin, but the popular artists are clearly deceptive and sinful.

Their writing represents evil doing and seduction. It is a “foule Devill that brings forth changeable covred urchins, which can glister like a glose worne neare gold.”⁴⁹ Martin is fighting the good fight. His only fault is mixing the message of reformation with the poisonous femininity of popular art: Martin has drawn in his “customers” with one word, “Reformation,” but he will poison them with the “Hemmlock” he has “mingled” with it.⁵⁰ Greene and Nashe responded to the Harveys’ and Spenser’s attempted reformation of popular art with the publishing of *Menaphon* in which they affect praise for Gabriel Harvey, Spenser, and the schoolmasters but overturn their agenda, creating a compelling celebration of feminine liberality that mocks the sterility in Spenser’s pastoral and continues the Harvey-Nash quarrel. Their fundamental battle was over the Puritans’ attempt to excise the feminine grotesque from the carnivalesque.

This feminine grotesque in popular culture could be represented by the mere presence of disorderly writing, copiousness, or bawdy subject matter and jests, or even by the writer’s social disobedience, but it also had a more concrete representation in the popular pastoral character of the shepherdess, known as the

⁴⁷ John Foxe and John King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*. Oxford World’s Classis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 154.

⁴⁸ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 2:10.

⁴⁹ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 2:13.

⁵⁰ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 2:17.

Queen of May, or Marian. She was associated with profane acts, laughter, and social disorder. This is reflected in a Puritan minister's complaint (1597) of a Whitsun ale⁵¹ in which he asserts that

piping, dancing, and Maid Marian coming into the church at the time of prayer to move laughter with kissing in church . . . deserve[s] to be called profane, riotous, and disorderly.⁵²

This popular pastoral figure of the feminine grotesque was more than just a part of the Carnival; it had also become a part of popular entertainment. In fact, Chambers argues that the *pastourelle* "forms a link between" the carnivalesque May-games and "folk-song and drama"⁵³; he adds that in the Elizabethan period, the figure of Marian also represented gender inversion and cross dressing, which both infuriated the Puritans and was used to mock them:

By the sixteenth century, the May-game Marian developed her own separate persona as a figure of sexual license, frequently presented as a conspicuously crossed-dressed male, as illustrated in an anti-Marprelate play of the 1580s where Martin appears on stage as the "Maide marian," possibly to satirize puritan opposition to boys playing female roles.⁵⁴

The popular writers' and their Puritan adversaries' representations of gender and its stability are the arena in which they battle for control over the rhetoric of popular culture. The popular writers attempted to preserve and even to amplify the grotesque in their carnivalesque, as it represented artistic liberality, their art largely being viewed as libidinal. Richard and Gabriel Harvey, on the other hand, in their attack on Greene and Nashe assert their notion of a masculine popular identity by drawing a distinction between their version of the carnivalesque and

⁵¹ A Whitsun ale was a church fundraiser held on Whit (white) Sunday, or the seventh Sunday after Easter (Pentecost), in which beer was sold to raise money for the Church. A Robin Hood play was usually performed. Players were not always contained within the play, as is evidenced by this complaint, but became part of the general festivities and must have even entered into the church services, at times.

⁵² François Laroque and Jane Loyd. *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*. European Studies in English Literature. Paperback ed. (1988; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 139. As E. K. Chambers notes, the games themselves—as well as Marian—represented an inversion of authority: "the conventional freedom of women from restraint [occured] in May, the month of their ancient sex-festival and the month in which the medieval wife-beater still ran notable danger of chevauchée." The name of the May Queen also reflects this carnivalesque insubordination: the name Marian, Chambers claims, is "an ironic expression of wifly submission, belong[ing] to Shrove Tuesday." E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 1: 170.

⁵³ Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (see note 52), 171.

⁵⁴ Stephen Thomas Knight, Thomas H. Ohlgren, *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*. Middle English Texts Series. 2nd ed. (1997; Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 282.

the feminine grotesque. Their version, as mentioned earlier, promoted masculinity that was forceful, chaste, and simpleminded. It combined elements in popular art, such as the voice of the lowly shepherd, with the Ramists' anti-Ciceronian plain style and its bias: fear of feminine disorder.⁵⁵ To the Harveys, Ramist rhetoric shared with the carnivalesque a "native" rudimentary use of language over the excessively ornate. It was liberating. It overthrew the authority of Aristotle, "the prince of philosophers," and the older order of scholasticism (anti-Ciceronians were synonymous with anti-Aristolians, as Ramus attributed Aristotle with teaching Cicero his deceptions).⁵⁶

However, this is where the similarities end. Ramist rhetorical ideology, as Greene's and Nashe's writing reveals, was not, despite its pretensions to plainness and hard work (or "discipline") a language of the masses; it was the language of elite schoolmasters and ambitious courtiers, and it was far from representing the freedom of Carnival.⁵⁷ Though it was not obviously courtly, it nevertheless represented an aspect of the Puritans' reformation of manners.⁵⁸ It was based on a desire for order, and it attempted to replace the deviance of a body-based pleasure in the arts with the virtue of art as an intellectual exercise or as a vehicle for moral instruction.⁵⁹

The proponents of Ramist rhetoric, including the Harveys, represented the visceral power in unrestrained artistic language as a dark primal "motion in the soul," which they wanted to reduce through a logical and ordered discipline to a mere subdued "ornamentation."⁶⁰ Artistic expression within the more civilized confines of reason could be useful in certain circumstances. Under Ramism, for example, poetry could be seen as belonging "less to rhetoric than to arithmetic";

⁵⁵ As mentioned previously, Fraunce's *Shepherd's Logike* emphasizes this agenda.

⁵⁶ See Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* (see note 13), 40.

⁵⁷ Indeed, Ramus's attack on the philosophic traditions that precede him, according to Ong, was enabled by the powerful allegiances at court he had made while an impoverished student at the university. Ong, *Ramus* (see note 46), 25.

⁵⁸ According to Abraham Fraunce's *Shepherd's Logike*, a manual illustrating Ramist principles through Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, Ramist was meant to "correct those who have . . . perverted good manners . . ." (see note 2), 58.

⁵⁹ David Graeber claims, when talking about Norbert Elias and Peter Burke, that Elias "has made a famous argument that the sixteenth century marked the beginning of a broad 'advance of thresholds of shame and embarrassment 'throughout Western Europe,' an increasing tendency to repress open displays of or even references to bodily functions in everyday interactions—a process which came to a peak around the end of the nineteenth century. Burke . . . has noted that at this same time Church authorities throughout Europe were also engaged in a much more explicit campaign to 'reform popular culture'—that is, to eradicate what they considered to be immoral elements in public life and ritual. English Puritans of the time spoke of both as part of the same 'reformation of manners.'" David Graeber, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2007), 694.

⁶⁰ Ong, *Ramus* (see note 46), 272.

it was useful for teaching eloquence, and it was also useful for breaking down complex ideas into simple percepts for "moral teaching."⁶¹ This is obvious in Harvey's and Spenser's experimentation with meter and in their morally edifying writing. The most popular writing, the highly pleasing and morally ambiguous popular works, as well as the artists who created them, were increasingly condemned by an educated Puritan elite.

The first of the Puritans to attack the popular writers personally was Richard Harvey. He lambasted Nashe in *The Lamb of God* (1590), as Lorna Hutson has pointed out, because Nashe "had the temerity to publish an unsolicited review of the contemporary state of English literature."⁶² According to Harvey, Nashe "had acted in civil learning as Martin doth in religion."⁶³ In other words, Nashe had challenged the hierarchy of learning as Martin had challenged the hierarchy of the church. Moreover, Gabriel Harvey disparaged as "womanish" what popular writers believed was the essence of art: its purely aesthetic appeal, imaginative abundance, and creative liberation. The tensions subtending their opposition were not only a product of their ideological bias but also a product of the changing world of popular art. Before the sixteenth century, "every craftsman and peasant was involved in the transmission of popular culture, and so were their mothers, wives and daughters"⁶⁴; but increasingly, because of the printing press and because of Puritan critics, the rich, polyphonic, and playful communal nature of the voice of the populace was condemned, while the "plain speech," the simple, clear sincerity of a monologic author, was promoted.⁶⁵ An important record of this shift is evident in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579).

The Puritan philosophy of Gabriel Harvey had a profound influence on his friend Spenser, as their published letters suggest. In the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Spenser, a supremely monologic and moral author, goes so far as to provide an interpreter of his intentions. A Mr. E. K. is "made privy to [Spenser's] counsel and secret meaning" in a glossary that follows every month (the poem is in the form

⁶¹ Ong, *Ramus* (see note 46), 218, 285.

⁶² Lorna Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context*. Oxford English Monographs (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1989), 201.

⁶³ Richard Harvey, "The Lamb of God (Epistle), Vol. 5 in *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (see note 9), 5:179–80.

⁶⁴ Burke, *Popular Culture* (see note 31), 91.

⁶⁵ As Morris Croll suggests, a "new emphasis on the inner and individual life of men" was arising in this period, "a 'heroic' virtue of self-dependence," especially among those who ascribed to these rhetorical practices (113). Morris William Croll and J. Maz Patrick, "Attic" and *Baroque Prose Style: the Anti-Ciceronian Movement*. *Essays by Morris W. Croll*, eds J. Ma Patrick and Robert O Evans, with John W Wallace. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). To Puritans, this was associated with the spiritual independence of the individual self from the authority of the church; for the artist, the insistence on the morality of a consistent identity in the arts was nothing less than artistic imprisonment.

of a calendar).⁶⁶ He explains away allegorical ambiguity and reduces the possibility of polysemic meaning in metaphors; for example, in the allegory about a kid and a fox, E. K. lets the reader know that "by the kid may be understood the simple sort of faithful and true Christians."⁶⁷ Similarly in the conclusion of November, he sums up the moral in that portion of the poem with the phrase "*Death biteth not.*"⁶⁸

The Harveys and Spenser also tied the sincere to the linguistically chaste, where chaste meant both subdued ornamentation and chaste sentiment. Spenser is minimalist in his praise of *Rosalind* and apologetic for any seductive expressions, forswearing carnivalesque Mayday festivals, lascivious music, lust and only bursting forth in flowery passionate praise for his Queen, which the logic of the poem justifies, as it occurs in the end of the month of April.⁶⁹ Rosilind is conspicuously missing in the poem. The shepherds' songs are represented as lewd complaints from wayward youth, which the author chastises, except when the song is the author's, in which case, his elegiacs are already chaste. The entire poem is written to correct the improper, or, as Colin claims in his conclusion, he writes to "save [his] sheep from shame."⁷⁰ There is no song of the shepherdess, as in the fifteenth-century ballad "*Robene and Makyne*," where Makyne is given a voice, or as is in Greene's *Menaphon* wherein the shepherdess and her lover negotiate romantic relationships, and in which the woman is shown to take part in the pastoral convention of displays of wit.

Spenser's pastoral is anti-carnavalesque. There are no comedic moments, there is no eroticism, no unbridled joy in song or love, only a lamenting of misguided lust, heavy sorrow, relinquishment and rejection of the worldly. Critics who do not see the popular pastoral as associated with the carnivalesque miss a rich tradition of popular pastoral. Francis Waldron believes that Ben Jonson wrote his final play (which was never finished) entitled *The Sad Shepherd: A Tale of Robin-Hood* (1637) to resurrect this lost tradition in the seventeenth century. Indeed, Laroque claims it is "a late rejoinder to Spenser," and it contains many of the elements contained

⁶⁶ Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender & Other Poems*. ed. Philip Henderson (London: Aldine Press, 1932), 7.

⁶⁷ Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* (see note 66), 49.

⁶⁸ Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* (see note 66), 94.

⁶⁹ Spensers' relationship with music is as vexed as his relationship with love. E. K. claims that Spenser in the persona of Piers in the October eclogue warns against the Arcadian Melody, in much the same way Lipsius and Ramus caution the reader regarding Cicero's style. E. K. recounts that "Plato and Aristotle forbid [it] from children and youth. For that being altogether on the fifth and seventh tone, it is of great force to mollify and quench the kindly courage, which useth to burn in young breasts. So that it is not incredible which the poet [Spenser] here saith, that music can bereave the soul of sense." Furthermore, suggesting a potential for sinfulness in music and poetry, he reminds the reader that Orpheus recovered his "excellent skill in music and poetry. . . from his wife Eurydice in hell." Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* (see note 66), 84.

⁷⁰ Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* (see note 66), 97.

in Greene and Nashe's works, especially the condemnatory mockery of Puritans.⁷¹ Jonson himself claims to write his play in order to confute "the heresy . . . that mirth by no means fits pastoral."⁷² Moreover, Jonson's play reinstates the outlaw Robin and his plucky shepherdess, Marian, whose voice begins the play. He restores her active female agency to the genre. She is introduced in the act of killing a deer with which to feast Robin's men, and like the shepherdess and knight of the *pastourelle* she is engaged in a verbal game of seduction with her would-be seducer, Robin Hood.

As in the *pastourelle*, she is also capable of wittily rebuffing seduction if she pleases. Here she initiates the banter. Running to Robin Hood, embracing and kissing him, she talks about all that has added to her pleasure that day: finally seeing him, the hunt, and her pleasing the dogs by giving them "tongues, ears, and dowcets" (the sweetmeats of the deer). To which Robin provokingly asks, "what? and the inch-pin?" (the inch-pin being part of the sweetmeats but also evocative of the penis).⁷³ She misses his suggestion, just replying, "yes" and so he makes it more explicit, using her own suggestion of pleasure. He asks, "your sports than pleased you?" In response to which, now getting his suggestions, she laughingly calls him a wanton. His reply implies that she was the initiator and that he grew to her embraces:

I wanted till you came, but now that I have you,
I'll grow to your embraces, till two souls
Distilled into kisses through our lips,
Do make one spirit of love.⁷⁴

The loving equality expressed in the exchanges between Robin and Marian stands in stark contrast to Spenser's portrayal of Colin's relationship with Rosalind, and while an elegiac passion is a convention of the pastoral, various conventions can be used to various political, artistic, and ideological ends.⁷⁵ In the case of *The Shepheardes Calender* Spenser is using a pastoral convention to overthrow the feminine grotesque so as to reform the carnivalesque in popular literature.

Greene and Nashe responded to these attempts to adapt and overthrow the carnivalesque in the arts in a similar manner to Jonson in his *Sad Shepherd*. They mocked the Harveys' and Spenser's attempt to reform the carnivalesque in art and wrote to liberate it. Their works lampooned many of the Harveys' notions about art and overturned the engendered discourse sometimes used against popular

⁷¹ Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World* (see note 52), 115.

⁷² Jonson, *Sad Shepherd* (see note 30), 4.

⁷³ Jonson, *Sad Shepherd* (see note 30), 21.

⁷⁴ Jonson, *Sad Shepherd* (see note 30), 21.

⁷⁵ See William Empson, *Some Versions of the Pastoral: A Study of the Pastoral Form in Literature*. (Norfolk: New Directions, 1950).

writers by emasculating the Harveys and (Robin like) by embracing their carnivalesque designation of popular writers as “women on top.”⁷⁶

Greene writes *Menaphon* (1589) in order to restore the feminine grotesque to the pastoral. The delightfulness of inordinate women and the acceptance of female sexuality are major themes in *Menaphon*. This fact together with Nashe’s praise of Harvey, Spenser, and the schoolmaster in the introduction to *Menaphon* probably infuriated the Harveys and inspired the retaliatory *Lamb of God* even more than did Nashe’s mere “unsolicited review” of literature.⁷⁷ *Menaphon* is Greene’s carnivalesque inversion of Spenser’s chaste, silent, and, indeed, absent female. In *Menaphon*, Greene promotes female agency, especially wit (associated with feminine disorder by Puritans), in his love matches; in fact, inordinate female sexuality finds acceptance in his work, as the highborn as well as the lowborn shepherdesses’ chastity is, unproblematically, less virtuous than cautious. In fact, chastity seems a necessary condition in a sexually tyrannical male world. Though doubt is cast over the sexual propriety of the heroine, Greene never struggles to resolve it. He seems content to leave the issue ambiguous. The shepherdess’s former lover suggests they had sex outside of marriage, though we do find out later they were probably married at the time; the fact that she almost has sex with her father and is willing to pay Menaphon with marriage for his hospitality, after she is finished mourning, suggests chastity is not at issue in this highly sexualized world so much as survival. She is redeemed as a character, as are all the characters, by wit.

From old married couples to lowbrow young shepherds, a playful banter between men and women is the proof of their unity. Perhaps the most endearing example of the importance of wit to Greene’s pastoral and the importance of it in endearing women to their spouses (and to the reader) is found in a conversation regarding a Marigold that takes place between Agenor and Eriphela. While sitting in the garden, Agenor suggests there is a lesson to be learned in the Marigold, but, tongue in cheek, he says that women (referring indirectly to his own wife) would probably prefer not to hear it, as it deals with the “Servile . . . duty” of a dedicated wife. The Marigold, he explains, “waketh and sleepth, openeth and shutteth her golden leaves, as [the Sun] riseth and setteth,” suggesting that a wife should likewise be so attentive.

The plucky Eriphela responds, “were the condition of a wife so slavish as your similtude would inferre, I had as leave be your page as your spouse, your dogge as your darling.” She claims she will have Marigolds thrown out of the garden so that they will not poison her. Agenor teasingly replies that there is no need for “a

⁷⁶ See Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), especially, 124.

⁷⁷ Richard Harvey, *Lamb of God* (see note 63).

thistle to fear being stung of a nettle." At which point, she mockingly threatens him to "beware, least in wading too farre in comparisons of thistles and nettles, you exchange not your rose for a nettle."⁷⁸ These witty exchanges that mask camaraderie in hostility suggest a warm equality that is the absolute inverse of Spenser's icy love complaint to his utterly absent shepherdess.

Likewise, in counter-distinction to Spenser's pastoral characters' insistent godliness, chastity, and rejection of the sensual even in music, Greene writes of a heroine who loves music, of base and noble shepherds who sing bawdy songs (odes to women's breasts and genitalia), and of oedipal plots as if they were everyday matters. Confuting critics who argue that Greene is in fact a moralist, the shepherds' songs of Menaphon and Melicretus are bawdy and affirm the Harveys' objections to Greene's writing as sexual. Both Menaphon and Melicretus take turns in a shepherds' song competition to describe their love. They include the usual blazons of their lovers' white skin and red blushing, but they become quite lascivious when they describe her breasts and vagina. Both contain images of sucking in their descriptions of her breasts. Menaphon's eclogue claims:

Her Paps are like fair apples in their prime,
As round as orient pearls, as soft as down,
. . . from their sweets love sucked his summer-time.⁷⁹

Melicertus replies to this image in his description of her breast in the following stanza:

Once Venus dreamt upon two pretty things,
Her thoughts they were affections Cheifest nests,
She sucked and sighed . . .
And when she waked, they were my mistress breasts.⁸⁰

Melicertus's use of the term "sucked" in this description of the creation of his lover's breasts by Venus could be read merely as sucking in breath. However, the juxtaposition of Melicertus's use of this word in a poetic competition with Menaphon, in which Menaphon uses "sucked" to refer to an erotic sucking action (summer-time sucking his sweets from her breasts), suggests that sighing is meant to be read as moaning rather than breathing. Things become even more obviously erotic when the shepherds describe her genitals. Menaphon claims his mistress's genitals are incomparable,

⁷⁸ Robert Greene, "Menaphon: Camillas Alarum to Slumbering Euphues," in his *Melancholie Cell at Silixedra*. 1589. *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart. 15 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 6:95.

⁷⁹ Greene, *Menaphon* (see note 78), 124.

⁸⁰ Greene, *Menaphon* (see note 78), 127.

Her maiden mount, the dwelling house of pleasure,
 not like, for why no like, surpasseth wonder,
 O, blest be he may . . .
 search for secrets of that treasure.⁸¹

Melicertus' reply is down right pornographic, evoking vivid images of wings as veiling her "bliss" and describing the liquidity of his mistress's genitals:

Once Cupid sought a hold to couch his kisses,
 And found the body of my best-beloved
 Wherein he closed the beauty of his blisses . . .
 The Graces erst, when Alcidian springs
 Were waxen dry, perhaps did find her fountain
 Within the vale of bliss were Cupid's wings,
 Do shield the nectar fleeing from that mountain.⁸²

Greene's shepherds are the carnivalesque inversion of Spenser's pious plowmen and an inversion that incorporates the highly visual use of metaphor to create the sexually pleasurable experience in literature that was so feared by schoolmasters. Moreover, Greene's highly visual image of female genitalia in its pleasantly avian description as "cupid's wings" stands in direct contrast to Spenser's images of female genitalia as a bird's nest, or rather his negative and oblique references in *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) to what is suggestive of female genitalia. For example, Colin finds a foul/fowl nest (though he avoids this pun by calling the bird an owl) when searching for love in nature. The nest suggests a vagina. He complains when he was hoping to find the honey bee "working her formal rooms," that he instead finds "a grisly toad-stool grown there . . . and loathed paddocks . . . where the ghastly owl . . . her grievous inn doth keep."⁸³ This description of the owl's nest seems to refer to the vagina in that it is an "inn," whose rooms are "worked." Moreover, though its direct reference is obviously elided, by using such anxiety-ridden and morally loaded adjectives as "ghastly," "grisly," and "grievous," in his description, Spenser suggests the nest's association with the lust the whole poem sets out to repudiate.

Like Spenser, Harvey also divorced the comic and the pleasurable from the carnivalesque and attempted to reform popular culture, which he depicted as a form of feminine disorder. In his letters, Gabriel Harvey expresses to Spenser this wish to reform and adapt popular print culture. He puts his wish into practice with the publication of his pamphlets to Nashe (and perhaps, as Nashe accuses

⁸¹ Greene, *Menaphon* (see note 78), 124.

⁸² Greene, *Menaphon* (see note 78), 128.

⁸³ Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* (see note 66), 97.

him, prior to this in his anonymous publishing of almanacs).⁸⁴ Harvey suggests that a “learned” university man, such as himself, might reform the publishing of the unlearned:

Send me within a weeke or two, some odde fresh paulting threehalfepennie Pamphlet for newes: or some Balductum Tragical Ballet in Ryme, and without Reason, setting out the right myserable, and most wofull estate of the wiked, and damnable worlde at these perillous days, after the devisers best manner: or whatsoever else shall first take some of your brave London Eldertons in the Head. In earnest, I could wishe some learned, and well advised University man, woulde undertake the matter, and bestow some paynes in deede upon so famous and materiall an argument.⁸⁵

In highlighting the masculinity of his imagined corrector, calling him a university “man,” and by referring to popular literature as “material” (or “matter”) that with toil “pains indeed” could be disciplined into something worthwhile, Harvey is alluding to a well-known conception of undisciplined language as female “matter” and equating that femininity with popular writers. According to Parker, “the image of ‘matter . . . readie to be framed of the workeman’ is repeated again and again in descriptions of proper disposition”⁸⁶; moreover, this “proper disposition” linked by Harvey with the “university man,” shapes and brings

order and rule to a ‘matter’ which . . . calls attention to affinities between this language of control of matter in discourse and the reigning gynecological conception of the male as ‘disposing’ the female in generation, ‘wandering,’ uncontrollable, and excessive materia.⁸⁷

Harvey’s praise of Elderton as “brave” or masculine is obviously ironic. The sentence which follows his praise begins, “in earnest,” suggesting his shift in sincerity. In earnest, he sees writers from the university as men. The stories of the popular press he associates with a female matter that needs to be corrected. In his letters to Spenser, Harvey clearly disparages popular culture and links it with non-rational, weak-minded women. His sentiment here is also echoed in the opposition he sets up between the popular and the learned in his earlier statement.

⁸⁴ There is actually some evidence in Harvey’s letters to Spenser that he was anonymously publishing work that the university might find objectionable. He says, “If peradventure it chance to cum once owte whoe I am I am (as I can hardly conceive howe it an nowe possibly be wholly kept in) . . . nowe, good Lorde, howe will my right worshipfull and thrisevenerable masters of Cambridge scorne at the matter.” Gabriel Harvey, *Letters to and From Edmund Spenser* (1579–1580) in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey* (see note 3), 114.

⁸⁵ Harvey, *Three Proper* (see note 3), 62.

⁸⁶ Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* (see note 7), 116.

⁸⁷ Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinities in Early Modern England*. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 86.

He claims that after dinner a couple of women in the company with which he dined asked him to try their “wits a little, and let them heare a peece of our deepe University Cuning” regarding the cause of earthquakes. After his long scientific explanation, he reports that they exclaimed,

Here is much adoee, I trowe, and little helpe. But if pleaseth Master H . . . to tell us a trim goodly Tale of Robinhood, I knowe not what. Or Sver if this be Gospell, I dowte, I am not of good beleefe. Trust me truly, Syr, your Eloquence farre passeth my Intelligence.

To which he responded:

Did I not tell you aforehand, quoth I, as much? And yet would you needes presume of your Capacities in such profound mysteries of Philosophie, and Privites of Nature, as these be . . . It is . . . enough to caste you both into a fitte, or two of a dangerous shaking feaver, unlesse you presently seeke some remedie to prevent it.⁸⁸

Harvey suggests an opposition between the popular and the learned discourses and, by this reported conversation, constructs the alternative discourse of popular tales as a comforting remedy (a toothless pleasure) for the dangerous shaking fever that the hyper potent “deepe University coning” is capable of provoking in frailer mental dispositions. His forays into the carnivalesque in his responses to Nashe will reveal he is not as unthreatened by the pleasurable in popular entertainment as he here suggests.

Like Martin Marprelate’s threatening the bishops with Dame Lawson, Harvey threatens popular writers with the specter of the female scold in *Pierces Supererogation*. His engendering of language mirrors the threat that he sees in the popular artists’ “womanish” writing, and his strategy in undermining their scolding rhetoric is not only to reflect and thereby deflect their assault but also to emasculate their feminine empowerment by reforming the scold. Harvey represents the scold in the most derogatory form of feminized insubordination, the whore; simultaneously, he figures a reformed version of the scold, as a chaste and upright lady. His female figure of carnival seems schizophrenic if the logic behind her dual depiction is not clear to the reader. In fact, most critics have ignored the unreformed scold in this work and debated the significance of Harvey’s upright lady. They miss the fact that the scolds in Harvey’s work represent the modes of writing that Harvey suggests are available to Nashe; he can be a reformed scold or remain a harlot. Harvey’s scold/whore parodies popular writers; she exposes the “harlotry” in their “unbridled stile,” as Harvey terms it.

His mocking explanation of why he has chosen to adapt this feminine discourse is that he “must learn to imitate by Example”; that is, he will take Nashe’s example

⁸⁸ Gabriel Harvey, *Three Letters* (see note 3), 44, 47.

of imitation and use his style against him.⁸⁹ Nashe often imitated the flatfooted Harvey to hilarious effect, but what Harvey is suggesting here is a mirroring of mirroring. He will, in other words, attempt to mirror the popular authors' mirroring of the Puritans' indictment of "womanish" writing. His indictment provoked Nashe and others to represent themselves deliberately as scolds, prostitutes, and oldwives.⁹⁰

The popular writers' strategy for liberating their artistic expression from Puritan opposition is similar to the strategy Luce Irigaray suggests women practice in seeking liberation from a discourse of oppression constructed upon "masculine logic." She suggests they "play with mimesis" and thus recover their place in discourse, without allowing themselves to be simply reduced by it. "One must assume the feminine role deliberately, which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it."⁹¹ Having been reduced to the cultural position of the feminine by a constructed "masculine" logic of the Harvey brothers, early modern popular writers do not allow themselves to be simply reduced to the insignificant. Instead, they assume the feminine role of bodily disorder voluntarily: Greene is as lascivious in *Menaphon* as Nashe is uproariously funny in his disordered carnivalesque overturning of Puritan authority in *Pierce* and other pamphlets. As Irigaray suggests, women do, they turn their subordination into an affirmation. They are so successful that Harvey tries to reform them by a similar mimicry. Imitating their feminine writing and suggesting simultaneously, if rather lamely, an alternative female position and, hence, artistic identity, Harvey tries to make virtuous women/artists out of them.

First Harvey reveals just what he despises in the popular artists and their "womanish" writing. He calls Nashe a "gossip" and asserts that the "Cucking-stool" is his Copyhold. Condemning Nashe's rhetorical excess, Harvey remarks that his adversary could "reade a Rhetoric, or Logique Lecture to Hecuba in the Art of raving, and instruct Tisiphone herselfe in her owne gnashing language." His indictment culminates in tying Nashe's excess of language, his "Unbridadle stile," to the unbridled sexuality of a whore. Indeed, he refers to the scold Nashe as a "butter whore." His "Oven-Mouth," indicative of that other orifice, Harvey renders insatiable, able to "swa[p]-downe a pounce of Butter . . . of a Breakefast."⁹²

⁸⁹ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:233.

⁹⁰ Although Greene was dead before the publications in which Harvey blatantly referred to Nashe and Greene's writing as Harlotry, Puritans had, before this time, drawn "an analogy between poets . . . [and] prostitutes" in their attacks against popular culture. See Ian Fredrick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England*. Studies in the History of Sexuality (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially 83.

⁹¹ Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 8.

⁹² Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:231. Harvey includes all artists associated with Nashe in his attack on Nashe. Though this is not evident in this quote, there are many instances in which

Harvey further claims that it takes a scold to correct a scold and that therefore a "Butterwhore . . . like an arrant Knight . . . might peradventure in some sort pay [Nashe] home with Schoolebutter." Indeed, a virtuous scold (Harvey in a carnivalesque gender inversion with virtue intact, of course) is coming through his new pamphlet entitled *Nashe's S. Fame*, to school him:

S. Fame is disposed to make it Hallyday. She hath already put-on her wispen garland over her powting Crosclouth: and behold with what an Imperial Maistie she commeth riding in the ducking-chariot of her Triumphe.⁹³

The scold/whore and Harvey's reformed scold share many characteristics. The image of the knight, the equestrian hero, for example, Harvey echoes in his gentlewoman's imminent scolding pen, "A very Pegasus indeede, [that] runneth like winged horse, governed with the hand of exquisite skill."⁹⁴ He engenders her triumphant lambasting, however (and also his), as masculine. Her scolding is a supererogation, or military action beyond the call of duty: "She it is," he asserts, "that must returne the mighty famous worke of Supererogation . . ."⁹⁵ Harvey's anxiety with assuming the feminine role is so profound he must simultaneously undermine what he attempts to set up.

The moral genre of the correcting mirror justifies Harvey's adaption of Nashe's style in *Pierces Supererogation*. Moreover, his correction through imitation works not just to show Nashe what a monster he is, by reflecting his style and thus correcting him; it also works to amend the figure of the scold, i.e., to reform the carnivalesque through reforming popular writers. As usual, Harvey's attack on Nashe is also an attack on Greene and the rest of the "gawdie witts" of England's "most-villanous Presse."⁹⁶ Drawing on Nashe's notorious style of mixed metaphors, punning, and allegory, Harvey uses a mixed metaphor consisting of a urinal, mirror, and a scold to diagnose, reflect, and reform Nashe's rhetoric. He claims that in his imminent work *S. Fame*—the work that also contains the threat of the virtuous scold—Harvey will determine and cure Nashe's malady (i.e., his artistry). He claims that he

cannot well cast his water, without an Urinall either old, or new: but an old Urinval will not so handsomly serve the turne: it would be a new, as the Capcase of Straunge Newes: but a pure mirrour of an impure stale; neither grose the clearer to represent a

it is and many other instances in which their artistic expressions are also associated with a lack of sexual restraint. See for example page 91 in which Harvey refers to them as "inventours of newe, or rvivers of old leacheries," and calls them a "whole brood of venereous Libertines."

⁹³ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 229.

⁹⁴ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 322.

⁹⁵ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 322.

⁹⁶ Harvey, *Pierce's Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:218.

grose substâce; nor green, the livelyer to expresse some greene colours, & other wanton accidents; nor any way a harlot, the trulyer to discoover the state of harlatricie.⁹⁷

The metaphor completely breaks down as it is being created. He goes from talking about urine to talking about prostitutes and popular writers. His awkwardness illustrates his contempt for artistic subtlety, lively writing, and elaborately figurative language; by exposing the dual meaning of the word stale and by alluding to Robert Greene, life, and disease in the word "green," he undermines the significance of metaphor to meaning. His contrivances and topical allusions, rather than suggesting the complex meaning that metaphor creates between seemingly contrary things, emphasize the belaboring of unlike terms unnaturally yoked to one another. Reflecting Nashe's malady and Harvey's judgment of that malady, this passage hangs upon three words, "gross," "stale," and "green" in many senses of the words. If Nashe's urine is literally thick, or gross, it is suggestive of disease, the disease that in fact Harvey attributes to the other meaning of thick, a meaning freighted with moral judgment: bloated with excess. This excess, as shown by Harvey's imitation, is in the nature of puns and metaphors. Like the pun on stale, meaning both corrupting female and urine, puns and metaphors reveal the polysemy of words that, depending on one's perspective, clutter or enrich the semantic field of language.⁹⁸ For Harvey, even more than cluttering, multiplicity perverts meaning, tying art to the unruly.

Though he is obviously teaching through imitation, in his anxiety with the lawlessness that comes with imitating Nashe, he claims to be teaching by contrast. He reflects through a chaste woman, "a pure mirror," where woman stands for artist, an "impure stale." As he claims early in *Supererogation*, Nashe's lawlessness in practicing the arts would destroy the authority of rhetoricians, the universities, and proper artists, and replace it with the criminality of prostitution and disease. Harvey laments,

Godnight poore Rhetorique . . . adieu good old Humanity: gentle Artes . . . sometime flourishing Universities . . . your vassalles of duety must . . . become the slaves of that dominiering eloquence, that knoweth no Art but the cutting Arte; nor acknowledges no school but the Curtisan schoole. The rest is pure natural . . . would it were not an infectious bane, or an incroching pocke.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Harvey, *Pierce's Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:228.

⁹⁸ See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (last accessed on Nov. 6, 2011). <http://www.oed.com>; hereafter OED. A "stale," in the sense of snare, or a false bird that lures other birds in order to entrap them, was often used figuratively to mean a woman, and an impure stale in the above quote suggests as much.

⁹⁹ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:52.

Nashe's style is criminal, according to the above passage. It is infectious and brings "an inroaching pocke," or syphilis. This is further developed in Harvey's diagnoses of Nashe's diseased style. In discussing Nashe's urine, he is also taking yet another stab at the style of Greene, and he blames Greene for Nashe's adaptation of this "wanton" style. He sets up an opposition throughout the pamphlet between writers like Greene, "mockers of the simple world," and the correct, chaste style, which is represented as not "greene" but "clear."¹⁰⁰ "Simple," "plain," "clear": all these terms contrast with Greene's and Nashe's abundantly imaginative and verbose "green" style—alluding to the fertile element in nature. Such a style Harvey interprets as feminine. He refers to Nashe and Greene as "mother wits" and complains of their "mother-tongues."¹⁰¹ The masculine by contrast is associated with restraint and reason, even a lack of fertility.

The fertile style of popular writers, when linked to the feminine as it is in Harvey's perspective, is not only deceptive it is sinful; its excess suggests unbridled sexuality and inordinate appetite. In Harvey's view, artistic civility, ironically, consists not in artfulness but in discipline. Art associated with corporeal pleasure is sinful and must be chastened. Hence, Harvey's chaste scold. The new chaste scold, however, has problems. These are reflected in the inability of Harvey to represent a chaste scold; the construction lies outside the logic of his discourse. He claims of the lady,

Every eye of capacity will see a conspicuous difference betweene her, and other mirrors of Eloquence . . . it will then appeare, as it were in a cleere Urinal, whose witt hath the greene-sickness.¹⁰²

His reformed scold represents all the artistic qualities he promotes: control, homosocial alliance, and simplicity, yet she remains a "urinal," associated with the lower bodily stratum. Harvey provides an example of her work; it contains jest book conceits and is less than decent by Harvey's standards, full of "bawdry," images of flaccid "meacocks" like "flagging flowre[s] in the rain," and pure "Nasherie" that Harvey cannot help but use in reply to Nashe's assault on Harvey's construction of masculinity.¹⁰³

Most scholars ignore the duality and contradiction with which Harvey represents the scold in this pamphlet. They concentrate on his depiction of a virtuous lady, and on Harvey's hinting at the possibility that she might be the Countess of Pembroke, rather than on all the ways in which he also disrupts this image with the specter of the carnivalesque "butterwhore" scold anxiously

¹⁰⁰ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:229.

¹⁰¹ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:51.

¹⁰² Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:324.

¹⁰³ Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* (see note 4), 2:17.

wedded to the active agency of the gentlewoman. Her wildly contradictory elements of chaste, lady-like behavior, masculine aggression, and sexual and linguistic excess belie the anxiety with which Harvey approached this carnivalesque figure. His attempt to harness her sexuality and transgression, and that of artistic expression, is obvious as is his telling failure to do so.

Similar to Gabriel, Richard Harvey also attempted to engender an idealized plain speech as masculine and to emasculate popular writers; in the process of trying to harness the power of the female wit. Richard's *Plain Perceval* opens with an old wives' tale beginning, which it almost immediately interrupts with a more authoritarian voice.

Gossip Reason the chiefe actor in the pageant of my brain, began this motherly, and well powdered tale. The medling Ape, that like a tallwood cleaver, assaying to read a twopeny billet in two pieces, did wedge in his pettitoes for a saie: and remained forth coming at the direction of those, whose occupation he encroached upon until he was free. Short though his apprenticeship, did he not pay for his learning.¹⁰⁴

Richard's description of the gossip's story as a motherly, powdered tale suggests the same biases found in Gabriel's rhetoric and indeed in the general logic of the masculine discourse with which the Harvey brothers have aligned themselves. The style of the woman's tale is associated with a carnivalesque sexual excess, "powdered" having a plethora of meanings but most often suggesting pickled, ornamented, and having been treated for venereal disease.¹⁰⁵ Powdered tales, in their ornamentation, are associated with the popular writers; therefore, the moral of the story, ironically, is as true for Martin as it is for the Harveys. Richard claims, in the above passage, that Martin "the medling Ape . . . "assaying to read a twopenny billet in two pieces," or to read a carnivalesque pamphlet in a contrary vein (i.e., wresting the carnivalesque style in support of Puritan causes, the heretofore enemy of popular culture) "pays" deeply for his cunning. In imitating the popular writers, "whose occupation he encroached upon," he becomes afflicted with their disease; in other words, he tells powdered tales and even assumes the inordinate female voice.

Richard Harvey suggests, as a warning to others, that he almost succumbs to the contaminating style of popular culture. Upon entering the fray, he begins by telling his audience a "poweder'd" tale, through Gossip Reason, "in the pageant" of his brain. In illustration of the reformation of popular literature, however, he recovers and is interrupted by the simple masculine plain style. As the Puritans' reconfiguring of the carnivalesque ensues, Gossip Reason's powdered tale is reformed. This "chiefe actor" in female garb is subordinated to her Landlord and

¹⁰⁴ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 5

¹⁰⁵ See the OED (last accessed Jan. 7, 2012).

is taught to "give every man his right." Following the above quote in which Martin is warned by the gossip's tale, the character of the landlord breaks in and, through the remainder of the plowman's tale, corrects the plowman:

Tush Percevall, hath no felicitie in these captious intergatories. And therefore good sweet Tennent Reason, speake plainly, and say Landlord mine (Give every man his right). He that thrusts his finger between the bark and the tree, is like to be pinched. Counterfet Martin . . . encounter not them . . . they carry fier in their harts, and death in their mouths . . . ¹⁰⁶

In this passage, Richard Harvey reforms and reduces the gossip by having her first submit to her lord, and then making her speak plainly. She then warns the imitating Martin against the wiles of the popular writers in a less obtuse style but with the same message. If you imitate the popular writers' style, you may be infected with their diseases. Similar to Puritan descriptions of prostitutes, the popular writers are depicted as carrying fire in their harts (having an inordinate sexual appetite) and spreading their sexually transmitted diseases through their use of language (carrying death in their mouths).

The popular writers defended their use of artistic language in a carnivalesque way by hysterical inversions and comedic parodies, in which they suggested the Puritan simplicity in the arts, which the Harveys promoted, and which Spenser practiced, to be the product of an uncharitable avarice and an attempted imposition of an anti-carnavalesque, overly pious schoolmaster tyranny upon the arts. For example, Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* reveals the way in which the Harvey brothers wreck the carnivalesque in his mockery of Gabriel's stereotypically Puritan moral outrage and piety as well as his pedantry in attempting to wed the rhetorical theories of a schoolmaster to popular culture:

Monsterous, monsterous and palpable, not to be spoken of in Christian congregations though hast skumd over the schoolemen, and of the froth of their folly made a dish of divinitie Brewesse, which the dogs will not eate. ¹⁰⁷

Then, in a typical parody and, simultaneously an inversion, he poses as a schoolmaster himself and gives Gabriel a rhetorical spanking for his misuse of language:

Thou . . . that came to the Logicke Schooles when thou wert a freshman, and writist phrases; off with thy gowne and untrusse, for I mean to lashe thee mightly. ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Richard Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 5.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse His Supplication to the Devill* (1592) in *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (see note 9), 1:98.

¹⁰⁸ Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse* (see note 107), 198.

There are few writers who could match Nashe's or Greene's playful virtuosity and, in fact, the more the Harvey brothers tried to engage in a battle of wits with Nashe and Greene the more their sincerity seemed to beg lampooning.

In *Pierce Penniless*, Nashe affirms the association (created by Puritans) of prostitutes as the enemies of plowmen, completely inverting their construction. He attributes to Puritans the feminine deception with which he has been accused and attributes to himself the vice correcting characteristics of the plowman. Instead of copiousness, he suggests, hypocrisy is the source of Puritan femininity. He creates a mock blazon of the proud hypocrite (ruby cheeks, cherry lips) in which the Puritan is said to cover his "uglie visage of Pride . . . after the color of the new Lord Mayor's posts" and so appear what he is not.¹⁰⁹ The Lord Mayor was the moral authority to whom people in London reported indecencies. Nashe claims that the Puritans' sinfulness is painted over with the color of moral authority. Similarly, in the following lines, Nashe asserts,

Wise was that sin washing poet that made the Ballet of Blue starch and poaking stickes, for indeed the lawne of licentiousnesse hath consumed all the wheat of hospitalities. It is said, Laurence Lucifer, that you went up and down London crying . . . like a lanterne & candle man. I mervaille no Laundresse would give you the washing of your face for your labour, for God knowes it is as black as the black prince.¹¹⁰

Utilizing the criticism of predatory economic practices and religious abuse employed in Langland's *Piers Plowman* where wheat can buy absolution, Nashe claims the hypocritical Puritan would white-wash his face with starch in order to cover his hypocrisy, but all the wheat has been consumed by the covetous Puritan courtier.¹¹¹ As David Baker interprets this passage in *On Demand*, "the wheat which once was given away in the name of charity is now given over to the making of starch to stiffen . . . ornate ruffs."¹¹² The ornate ruffs are worn by Laurence's counterpart, the upstart courtier. According to both Nashe and Greene, again in the topoi of Langland's *Piers Plowman*, the Puritan upstart is responsible for overturning the feudal system through a rejection of charity and through the introduction of a new system based on commerce and rack-renting.

¹⁰⁹ Nashe, *Pierce Penniless* (see note 107), 181.

¹¹⁰ Nashe, *Pierce Penniless* (see note 107), 181.

¹¹¹ As Jones points out in Langland's *Piers Plowman*, "'a confessor coped as a frere' (B3.35/C3.38) approaches Mede and proclaims 'I shal assoile pee myself for a seem of whete' (B3.4/C3.42) Absolution is being sold for material gain, the process of confession which should depend on genuine contrition for one sins is being hijacked by financial self-interest in the form of 'wheat.'" Jones, *Radical Pastoral* (see note 2), 18.

¹¹² David Baker, *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 40.

The upstart in *Quip* claims his curious and quaint apparel motivates “merchants to seek foreign marts, to venture their goods and hazard their lives.”¹¹³ What Nashe refers to as the “lawn of licentiousness,” in the previous passage,¹¹⁴ is also evocative of its opposite, the privatization of the land and the uncharitable barriers, or enclosures, that Nashe and Greene attribute to middle-class landowners who are destroying the hospitality of the old feudal system. This is what Greene claims in *Quip*, when he represents the “yeoman” as hating the upstart because he has “persuaded so many Landlords, for the maintenance of [his] bravery, to raise the rents.”¹¹⁵ Greene’s dedication of *Quip* to a “supporter of ancient hospitality” belies this same sentiment as does his claim that he wrote *Quip* to oppose “upstart gentleman” who “raised rents, racked their tenants, and imposed great fines” and because of whom “hospitality was left off, neighbourhood was exiled, conscience was scoffed at, and charity lay frozen in the street.”¹¹⁶ The sparse style advocated by Ramist rhetoric, evident in the writing of the Harvey brothers, Nashe, like Greene, mocks as evidence of their uncharitable natures. He tells the Harvey’s friend, Richard Litchfield, in *Have With You to Saffron-Waldon*:

in tender charity and comiseration of [Richard Harvey’s] estate, I add ten pound & a purse . . . on that condition in their last will & testament they bequeath me eightene wise words in the way of answer betwixt them. I dare give my word . . . they will never do it, no . . . their whole stock of wit, when it was at best, being but ten English Hexameters and a Lenuoy . . . Wherefore, generous Dicke . . . I utterly despair of them.¹¹⁷

Nashe’s prefacing and closing with the words “charity,” “generosity,” and “despair” emphasize not only the parsimony in the Harvey brothers’ rhetorical philosophy but Nashe’s judgment of its economic underpinnings.

Even in Jonson’s late pastoral *Sad Shepherd*, his final assault on Puritans, Robin complains of the loss of “those charitable times” “when all did either love or were beloved.”¹¹⁸ Tuck agrees that “the sower sort of shepherds” (which the editor glosses as Puritans), who are filled with “covetise and Rage” are poisoning the lambs and digging ditches so that calves drown and heifers break their necks just to vex their neighbors. Jonson’s editor mentions Jones’s *Adrasta* as “another

¹¹³ Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier: or A Quaint Dispute Between Velvet Breeches and Cloth-breeches* (1592) in *The Life and Complete Works* (see note 78), 11:230.

¹¹⁴ The term “lawn” in the early modern period referred to an open grassy field between woods. See the OED (last accessed Jan. 7, 2012).

¹¹⁵ Greene, *Quip* (see note 113), 11:210.

¹¹⁶ Greene, *Quip* (see note 113), 11:210.

¹¹⁷ Nashe, *Have With You to Saffron Waldon* (see note 9), 3:11.

¹¹⁸ Jonson, *Sad Shepherd* (see note 30), 15.

instance of pastoral satire directed against Puritans. Adrasta complains about "The curious precisness, / And all pretended gravity, of those, / That seek to banish hence harmless sports / Have thrust away much ancient honesty."¹¹⁹ If Nashe and Greene were not drawing on an already existent anti-Puritan discourse, they were instrumental in creating one.

As discussed earlier, utilizing the rhetoric of economic abuse, the Harveys had attempted to link artistic language and popular writers with the worldly greed and effeminate nature of the courtier. The courtier was traditionally represented as defrauding and extorting the plowman. Richard warns, "I pray you defile not my sheeps russet coate . . . this home made Barley, and my plain speeches may have as much wool (I dare not say so much wit) as your double pild velvet."¹²⁰ Moreover, the Harveys include in their representation of themselves as plowman a nationalistic rhetoric evocative of domesticity and England's one major industry: wool. They claim their plain speech has much wool and not wit (wit they suggest by this opposition is foreign). Nashe and Greene completely invert this nationalistic, economic, and engendered rhetoric. In their works, the Puritan is represented as the insatiable upstart courtier. He is a foreigner in *Quip*; in *Penniless*, he is an Englishman so disconnected from his own nation that he would not only defraud and extort the poor and noble alike but would also defraud them of their English festive traditions and customs and attempt to enclose poetry and the literary arts within the parsimony of their economically motivated aesthetics.

In *Quip*, Greene not only mocks Puritans, and especially Gabriel Harvey, as upstart courtiers but he also lampoons the Ramist philosophy behind the business like outlook of the Puritan poet. In Harvey's reformation of poetry, his self-proclaimed invention of English Hexameter, Greene objects to his arrogant attempts to enclose the richness of experience within the boundaries of his mathematical approach to language. Greene claims,

Methought I saw an uncouth headless thing come pacing down the hill, stepping so proudly with a geometrical grace as if some artificial braggart had resolved to measure the world with his paces; I could not decry it a man although it had motion for it wanted a body, yet seeing legs and hose, I supposed it to be some monster nourished up in those deserts.¹²¹

His mockery of Gabriel's poetic persona corroborates what Walter Ong has argued: under Ramism, poetry "become[s] appliqué work of the worst mechanical sort, for, as Ramus occasionally hints, the rules that govern it belong . . . less to

¹¹⁹ Jonson, *Sad Shepherd* (see note 30), 79.

¹²⁰ Harvey, *Plain Perceval* (see note 8), 12.

¹²¹ Greene, *Quip* (see note 113), 9.

rhetoric than to arithmetic."¹²² However, even Harvey's arithmetic is flawed. The meter he has promoted, hexameter, is completely at odds with the natural rhythms of the English language as Nashe's parody of Harvey's poetry reveals. It is "all up hill and down . . . like a horse plunging through the myre in the deep of winter, now soust up to the saddle, and straight aloft on his tiptoes."¹²³

Greene also points to a lack of discernment and, indeed, a lack of manliness in Harvey's inability to recognize his incongruous "motions." He suggests Harvey's and, in general, the Puritans' stereotypical repudiation of bodily pleasure when, upon seeing velvet breeches approach, he claims that he could not "decry it a man although it had motion for it wanted a body." Pleasing rhythms normally determine the music of poetry. This is a very basic bodily response to rhythm. Understanding the rhythms that were pleasing, in the early modern period, was equated with a certain manliness, honorability, and sense. As Lorenzo tells Jessica in *Merchant of Venice*, "The man that hath no music in himself . . . / Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; / The motions of his spirit are dull as night, / Let no such man be trusted."¹²⁴

Nashe suggests that Harvey's failings in art are a product of his lack of ability to discern the pleasurable. In *Pierce Penniless*, Nashe creates an allegory about Puritans who attempt to convince the masses to repudiate the pleasurable experience of art. Nashe's allegory draws upon the "Plutrachan image of the bee sucking its honey even from noxious herbs," an analogy that, as Chambers claims, had become a commonplace in the defense of the arts against Puritans in the Elizabethan era.¹²⁵ The allegory involves the husbandman, who like the plowman and the yeoman, is associated with the soil, which is suggestive of native wit. The fox, who "can tell a fair tell, and covers all knaverie under conscience," attempts to convince "the good honest husband man to pause, and mistrust their own wits." He does this, according to Nashe, in order to "purge [his] popular patients of the opinion [that] their old traditions and custums" are any good.¹²⁶

He convinces them that they are poisoned because the soil that produced them (England) is poisonous (infected with frogs) "whereas in other countries, Scotland, Denmarke and some pure parts of the 17th provences" there are "no creatures to curropt" the goodness of the soyle."¹²⁷ In equating the better soil with Puritan countries, Nashe's allegory suggests that a treasonous anti-English sentiment underpins the Puritans' desire to reform the arts. In answer to the Puritan

¹²² Ong, *Ramus* (see note 46), 282.

¹²³ Nashe, *Have With You* (see note 9), 7.

¹²⁴ William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* (1600) *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin. 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 5.1.91–96.

¹²⁵ Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse* (see note 107), 238.

¹²⁶ Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse* (see note 107), 225.

¹²⁷ Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse* (see note 107), 225.

objection to an Italian, or foreign, extravagance in the abundance of Nashe's language, Nashe defends his rhetorical style as pro-English, though not nationalistic; he would not be so confined:

Old Romanes in the writings they published, thought scorn not to use any but domestical examples of their own hom-bred actors, scholers and champions . . . Coblers, Tinkers, Fencers, none escapt them, but they mingled all in one Gallimaufrey of glory. Here I have used a like method, not of tying my selfe to mine owne Countrie, but by insisting in the experience of our time; and if I ever write any thing in Latine (as I hope one day I shall), not a man of any desert here amongst us, but I will have up. Talrton, Ned Allen, Knell Bentlie, shall be made known to France, Italie, and Spain.¹²⁸

As Nashe claims in the above quote, *Pierce Penniless* is indeed a glorious "gallimaufrey."¹²⁹ It mingles and embodies the essence of the carnivalesque in a clowning celebration of abundance and disorder that excludes nothing but exclusion. There is perhaps no voice unheard in the parodies that make up *Pierce Penniless*. Even the schoolmaster is included by way of parody. Nashe and Greene shift the definition of "Pierce" in their responses to the Harveys. He is not plain but poor, having been robbed by upstarts like the Harveys. The Harveys' attempt to impose an ordered simplicity upon this carnivalesque figure is yet another assault. In his association with the liberality of artists, the defenders of popular traditions, the plowman, though poor, remains a figure of abundance and hospitality, inhabiting the fertile world of writers like Greene and Nashe's imaginations. In opposition is the stark world of the court or city, the place of the upstart Puritans and their rejection of charity. Nashe and Greene suggest that the sterile realm of an imagination ruled by Ramism was no place for a plowman.

In *Disputation*, the redeeming of pleasure and abundance and the restoration of a carnivalesque liberation through insubordination continues through Greene's representation of the repentant prostitute. The *Disputation* is Greene's urban pastoral. Like all of Greene's repentance and cony-catching pamphlets, it was written in opposition to the Puritans' carnivalesque reformation. In *Disputation*, Greene writes to overturn Puritans' attributing chastity to honesty, promulgating provincial morality, and imposing sincerity in authorial identity, but, primarily, to invert Spenser's pastoral.

Paul Alpers claims that an important element of pastoral literature lies in its "creation of imaginative space," and, as he further notes, this is a space within which relationships are negotiated. Commentators on Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1598–1600), as Alpers points out, refer to other plays in which "a sojourn in a

¹²⁸ Nashe, *Pierce Penniless* (see note 107), 215.

¹²⁹ The OED gives the definition of "gallimaufry," in 1551, as a dish made out of hashing up odds and ends of food; a hodge-podge, a rag out.

'green world' enables a return to court."¹³⁰ As in *As You Like It* gender, filial, and class relationships are resolved. Identities are tested there, and some harmonious resolution is usually found: brothers are reconciled and lovers are united. In Spenser, gender relationships begin and end estranged, and the only evolution in Colin's relationship with Rosiland is his reported discovery of her betrayal. Colin himself does not emerge reconciled or more fully realized, and even nature, in this pastoral, is portrayed as a place of seduction and error, not of growth.

Greene's *Disputation* responds to *The Shepheardes Calender* by inverting its scheme. The pastoral space, as Terry Gifford claims, is created "with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" in mind.¹³¹ This urban space is imagined as having become too corrupt or too restrictive to find new forms of community or understanding. In *Disputation*, Greene re-imagines the pastoral space in an urban environment, the inverse of the country, creating out of the place of the tavern a site of refuge and gender negotiation. The witty banter between Nan and Lawrence, in which they invert the aspiration to virtue by holding a competition over who is the most detrimental to the commonwealth (and by vigorously attempting to attain that title), evokes the camaraderie of the old married couple in *Menaphon*. When Lawrence attempts to diminish the seriousness of Nan's criminality by claiming, after she has told him about one of her tricks, that he thinks his "mother wiser than all the honest women of the parish besides," Nan mockingly replies, "belike she was of our faculty, and a matron of my profession."¹³²

Greene's urban pastoral anticipates the modern genre in which the city acts as a pastoral space

where subjectivity is always in play and hence subject to newly ambiguous possibilities that allow one to escape from deleterious proscriptions . . . the city is . . . available for those who want to change their roles, abandon a fixed identity, or otherwise disguise themselves.¹³³

Greene's city is more alive than Spenser's countryside, and the reader participates in the vivacity of its characters. In fact, their vivacity, in contrast with Spenser's sincere monologic morality, consists in their heroic adaptability in role playing and

¹³⁰ Paul Alpers is quoted in Timothy Gray's essay, "Semiotic Shepherds: Gary Snyder, Frank O'hara, and the Embodiment of an Urban Pastoral," *Contemporary Literature* 39.4 (1998): 523–59; here 523 and in *What is Pastoral?* (see note 26), 130.

¹³¹ Terry Gifford, *Pastoral: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 94.

¹³² Robert Greene, *A Disputation Betweene a Hee Conney-catcher, and a Shee Conney-catcher, whether a Theefe or a Whoore, is Most Hurtfull to the Common-Wealth* 1592 in *The Life and Complete Works* (see note 78), 10:11.

¹³³ Timothy Gray, "'A World without Gravity': The Urban Pastoral Spirituality of Jim Carroll and Kathleen Norris," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 47.3 (Fall 2005): 213–52; here, 225.

in the quick improvisation of witty comebacks; it echoes the heroism of the shepherdess in *Menaphon*, who survives by playing the role of the shepherdess and who escapes precarious situations by the use of her skill in language. Malleability and tenacity, not sincerity and honesty, are what is praiseworthy in Greene's characters. Malleability, for example, is what allows for the seeming villain, the prostitute, to become a Robin Hood figure, i.e., the outlaw who betters society by outwitting criminals (often masquerading as officials). In one of the prostitute's merry tales, a strumpet and some cony-catchers trick a braggart cony-catcher out of his stolen money.

After having come up with various strategies, which he is too clever to fall for, they finally conceive a hilarious scheme in which they play various roles (sheriff, bawd, and virtuous wife) and by which they eventually get the most notoriously, proud cony-catcher to hide naked in a closet and gladly give up his money-filled clothes. In fact Greene himself seems to pop in and assume the Puritan designation of the popular writer as whore and the Harveys' and Spenser's designation of themselves as Shepherds (only he converts them to a Robin Hood type shepherd, the thief Lawrence). At the beginning of a *Disputation*, Nan tells Lawrence to "put up [his] pipes and chop logic and give [her] leave to speak."¹³⁴ Moreover, Greene challenges Spenser's notions of virtue, especially chastity and honesty, showing more love and understanding between a thief and a whore negotiating their professional relationship than Spenser shows between Hobinal and Colin Clout, Spenser's "pædrastice" model of ideal masculine friendship that supersedes his "gynerastice."¹³⁵

Finally, Greene mocks the Harveys' attempt to depict the popular writer as prostitute and their moral certainty regarding puritanical agendas by writing a pious tale of self-deception. In the tale of the conversion of an English courtesan, Greene tells his own version of the story of St. Thais. In the story of St. Thais, a devout old man of God converts a rich and famous courtesan. She burns all her belongings and spends the rest of her short life in penance for her disgraceful acts. In Greene's version, the courtesan tells a story of a devout, attractive young man, who convinces her in a dark room that her "bewtifull faire, and well formed . . . bodie" has become "the habitation of the diuel." Rather than convincing her to give up all pleasure and spend her life in repentance, he merely asks that she leave the house in which she is staying, "and [he] will become [her] faithful friend in all

¹³⁴ Greene, *Disputation* (see note 131), 6. Ramists were often mocked for their logic chopping, and pipes are symbolic of shepherds.

¹³⁵ Spenser, *Shepherd's Calender* (see note 66), 16. "And so is pæderastice much to be preferred before gynerastice, that is, the love which enflameth men with lust toward womankind."

honestie." Although he promises to "use [her] as [his] own sister," he ends up marrying her.¹³⁶ As Virginia Macdonald astutely observes,

despite her religious focus and her emphasis on God's hand in her change . . . her own narration implies that her sexual attraction for the man, his appeal to her vanity, and his wish that she 'were as honest . . . as bewifull', prompts her reform more than does any true sense of repentance.¹³⁷

The courtesan is obviously not the only pious hypocrite in the story; convert and converter alike are self-deceiving. Through this allegory of conversion, Greene suggests the possibility that the Harveys, his would-be converters, might be motivated by such a guilty pleasure. Focusing on the Puritan rather than the prostitute's hypocrisy, Greene's story suggests that sometimes the converter is really more interested in the convert than the conversion. In the pursuer and pursued theme of shepherds, prostitutes, and popular writers, Greene makes absolutely clear just who the grotesque really is, and he never lets his reader forget the ubiquity of hypocrisy.

Both the prostitute and the pastoral play important roles in the battle over artistic expression between the Harveys and popular writers. The rhetoric of the rural and the riotous, embodied in the figure of the prostitute and the plowman/shepherd, though not referring to an actual place or real people, articulate oppositional literary identities that both suggest the liberality important to the popular writers and underwrite the condemnatory coercion that enabled the Harveys' attempted reformation of popular art. The Puritans configure the prostitute as the ultimate outsider, the abject female. She inhabits the opposite ideological place of the pastoral shepherd, whom they have reconceived of as a pious plowman. Having constructed the pastoral as a place of imagined community, the prostitute's disorder establishes, through opposition, the boundaries of their chaste puritanical social identity, while justifying their literary engagement with popular writers. In contrast, drawing on the festive tradition that underwrites the pastoral tradition, the grotesque absence of boundaries in the carnivalesque, popular writers tear down the edifice of a religiously chaste Puritan identity based on a deceptively chaste pastoral. Popular writers not only redefine the pastoral space as riotous, but they also expose the Puritans' pretense to reformation as an excuse to engage in the corporeal pleasure of popular disorder.

In summary, the trope of rural space played an important part in the Harvey Nashe Quarrel. It expressed Puritan and popular aesthetic sensibilities, which is

¹³⁶ Greene, *Disputation* (see note 131), 79.

¹³⁷ Virginia Macdonald, "Robert Greene's Courtesan: A Renaissance Perception of a Medieval Tale," *Zeitschrift für Anglistic und Amerikanistik* 32.3 (1984): 211–19; here 214.

especially evident in their use of "Plain Pierce." Puritans associated Pierce with an aesthetically pleasing plain dealing. Popular artists, on the other hand, associated plain dealing with stupidity and Puritans with the suppression of complex artistic expression and the imposition of inane sets of artistic rules, such as the notoriously misguided English hexameter. Popular writers shifted the definition of Pierce so that he was newly associated with the liberality of artists defending popular traditions. Moreover, through the tradition of Pierce Plowman, they revealed a stark opposition between this rural figure of generous hospitality and the wide spread urban acceptance of usury, the rejection of charity, and the unnatural desire for social advancement which they suggested characterized their (hypocritically pleasure seeking) Puritan adversaries, and indeed, it is this same discourse of animosity that will contribute to the anti-Puritanism of the Jacobean and Restoration comedy of the next century.

Chapter 25

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The Poet in Exile: Robert Herrick and the “loathed Country-life”¹

London-born poet Robert Herrick, who served as Vicar of Dean Prior in Devonshire from 1629–1646, and, after the Restoration, from 1660 to 1674, frequently writes about the countryside in his poetry volume, *Hesperides, or The Works both humane & divine of Robert Herrick, Esq.*, first published in 1648. Many of his poems portray the natural world, agrarian society, and even the non-existent world of the Fairies in a celebratory manner, and, taken as a whole, suggest there is much to admire in country life. His removal from London to the rural space of Devonshire not only served his poetics, as he himself acknowledges in his poems, but also underscores his representation of human existence and the natural world, and reinforces his own London experience of social custom and religious ritual.

Most importantly, the country provides Herrick with an opportunity to explore classical modes and themes, particularly concerning the relative simplicity rural spaces embody, thus enabling the contemplative man to examine his humble existence as a Christian subject. However, while Herrick is capable of writing about the country without either vilifying country practices or constructing the speaker of the poem as a frustrated prisoner of rural space, a small but significant number of his poems can be categorized as anti-rural, portraying country life as distasteful, if not downright abject. In fact, Herrick refers to the country life as “loathed” on a least four occasions,² suggesting that the country is to be reviled

¹ Robert Herrick, “Upon Himself,” *The Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. L. C. Martin (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 171–72, line 1. All subsequent citations from Herrick’s poems are taken from this edition and are cited parenthetically within the text.

² The four poems are “Discontents in Devon,” “To His Household Gods,” “His Lachrymae: or Mirth Turned to Mourning,” and “Upon Himself.”

rather than celebrated. In a collection of poetry in which he embraces many theatrical personas which make it difficult for the reader to discern his true opinions about a variety of subjects, these anti-rural effusions are, nonetheless, striking in their challenge to both the pastoral and georgic traditions, which, whether representing the country through the lens of fantasy or reality, are nearly always positive in their renderings.

While at times Herrick embraces romanticized notions of pastoral simplicity and, at others, acknowledges the harsh realities of the agrarian life, he reveals, ultimately, that the poet's placement in the country is problematic: the rural retreat does not always result in poetic achievements, much less personal contentment. Herrick's negative representations of the country, which he articulates in relation to his own discontentedness in his rural environment, exist in striking contrast with the civilized pleasures of intellectualism and creativity that Herrick associates almost exclusively with the thriving literary world of London. In fact, several poems in which Herrick examines his rural environment—in particular, "His Lachrymae: or Mirth Turned to Mourning," "Upon Himself," and "His Return to London"—address the loss of poetic community and identity through both vilification of the country and idealization of the city. More specifically, Herrick uses his "banishment" from London and his "confinement" in Devonshire to explore two facets of the poet's concern: first, the loss of skill, frequently associated with the absence of his Muse; and, subsequently, the anxiety over lost recognition and patronage attendant upon his poetic failings. Ultimately, he represents his experience of country life as an unfortunate but perhaps necessary exile so he may "Grow up to be a Roman Citizen" ("Upon Himself," 2) with his time spent in the country preparing him to resume his rightful place in London as a citizen-poet.

1. Herrick as Poet

Herrick was born in London to an undistinguished family in trade, and, indeed, seemed destined for a non-literary life, yet his earliest writing evidences a creative and receptive mind familiar not only with the classical tradition, but also with the work of his contemporaries.³ Born in 1591 in Goldsmith's Row in south Cheapside,

³ Herrick's biography has been largely derived from the internal "evidence" found in his poems, partly because the known facts of his life are limited to a select number of documents: the Herrick Family Papers, documents from the Leicestershire Record Office, entries in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, and a set of begging letters Herrick wrote to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, while he was a student at Cambridge. For a careful assessment of the evidence, see Tom Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life," *The Robert Herrick Project* (University of Newcastle, 2006; [<http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/Biography%20of%20Robert%20Herrick%20by%20Tom%20Cain.html>]; last accessed on Dec. 29. 2011).

Herrick was nineteen months old when his father, a successful jeweler and moneylender, committed suicide.⁴ Herrick and his two elder brothers remained in London under the guardianship of their paternal uncle, William, while his mother, Julian, left London (with two younger children) to live with a sister in Hampton. The poet may have attended Westminster School or, more likely, The Merchant Taylor's School, where he would have received the standard training in Latin, some Greek, and mathematics, but no records exist to confirm he attended either institution.⁵ Given that at least one poem dated to 1611–1612, "A Country Life: To His Brother, Mr. Tho. Herrick," reveals a familiarity with classical works prior to his matriculation at Cambridge, Herrick very likely received some schooling prior to the period in which he began to learn the family trade. Tom Cain notes this particular poem "invokes a wide range of classical authors, and imitates Jonson's then-unpublished 'To Sir Robert Wroth,' suggesting that he knew Jonson before his presumed contact with the latter's circle in the mid-1620s."⁶

Despite his creative tendencies, Herrick was apprenticed to his goldsmith uncle in 1607, but managed to negotiate a release from the usual ten-year contract in 1613 when he was 21 to enter St. John's College at Cambridge, where he remained in residence through the completion of his M.A. in 1620. During this period he had frequent money troubles, with his uncle not only in charge of his modest inheritance, but likely withholding a portion of his nephew's quarterly income so that he could use it for his own investment purposes.⁷ At Cambridge Herrick met two future patron, Sir Clipsby Crew and Mildmay Fane, the future second Earl of Westmoreland (for whom he wrote "The Hock-Cart; or, Harvest Home"), and may well have had some contact with the poet George Herbert, the playwright James Shirley, and the future rebel and head of the Interregnum government, Oliver Cromwell. We know little about Herrick's post-graduate years in London, which total nearly a decade, and during which he appears to have made connections with other poets, including Ben Jonson.

Although we have no record of professional activity during his immediate post-graduate period, he may have served as a domestic chaplain after taking orders

⁴ Herrick fell to his death from the second story of the family abode: suicide is assumed owing to the fee of £222 paid to the crown before his estate could be settled. See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), par. 2–3.

⁵ While earlier editors, often working from the allegedly biographical details found in his poems, assumed Herrick must have attended Westminster, more recent scholars argue for Merchant Taylors, where his cousins, William's sons, likely attended. See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), par. 5.

⁶ See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), para. 4.

⁷ See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), para. 6. Cain notes that Herrick was consistently out of funds during his college years, and that when he left Cambridge he owed the college steward £10 (par. 8).

in 1623. We do know he was assigned to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham as chaplain for the failed expedition to the Isle of Rhé (near La Rochelle) in 1627, and he may have continued to serve as Buckingham's chaplain until the Duke's assassination in 1628. Herrick was "presented" to the Vicarage of Dean Prior in 1629, taking up residence in the following year, and appears to have served contentedly until the onslaught of the Civil War in the early 1640s. As a royalist, he was eventually forced to leave Devonshire due to the proximity of parliamentary forces in 1647. Herrick then returned to live in London in poverty, during which time he published *Hesperides*. After the succession of Charles II in 1660, he was reinstated at Dean Prior to once again serve its spiritual community until his death in 1674 at the age of 83.

Hesperides, published in 1648 and containing over 1400, mostly short, poems, is organized neither by composition date nor by subject, and its poems certainly reflect a broad range of themes: there are poems on "Julia" (and her breasts, clothes, voice, etc.) and other young women; poems written to noble personages; poems on poetry and the playwright and poet Ben Jonson in particular; poems on poverty and wealth; poems on flowers, rivers, and faeries; poems addressed to family members; and poems on "himself." A handful have been given extended treatment by scholars and usually 20 or so are regularly anthologized, although perhaps less regularly taught in British Literature surveys in universities throughout the west.⁸ Among this small group, only "The Hock-Cart; or Harvest Home" focus specifically on rural activities, while others, such as "Corinna's Going a Maying," are not bound precisely to a rural locale.

Critical responses to the volume as a whole have noted *Hesperides'* great variety of subjects and style, leading some scholars to dismiss it as an unwieldy and ultimately incoherent work.⁹ More recently, however, readers have discovered order where others have seen only chaos. Ann Baynes Coiro, for instance, has reexamined the book within the tradition of epigram writing, noting that many of the inconsistencies noted by earlier generations of critics are actually quite coherent and productive. In particular, while she notes that the lyric and epigrammatic modes represented in the volume may at first seem at odds, they actually work to create a sustainable tension between the "lyrics of royal praise" and the "epigrams

⁸ *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 1*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), for example, includes 23 of Herrick's poems (including two selections from *The Noble Numbers*), while *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 2006), reproduces 30.

⁹ Among the earliest critics reluctant to see any specific design in *Hesperides* are F. R. Leavis, *Reevaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), 36–40; and T. S. Eliot, "What is Minor Poetry?" *Sewanee Review* 54. 1 (1946): 1–18. The first critic to consider *Hesperides* as a cohesive volume was John L. Kimmey in his essay "Order and Form in Herrick's *Hesperides*," *Journal of English and German Philology* 70.2 (1971): 255–68.

of Stuart policy" that, ultimately, complicates our understand of Herrick's overall design for his work.¹⁰

While Herrick did produce some religious poetry,¹¹ his secular offerings in *Hesperides* far exceed the spiritual, which number at a paltry 271. Instead of honing his art within the genre of religious lyric, represented in print by this time by John Donne's *Poems* (1633), George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633), and Richard Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple* (1646), Herrick made his mark as one of a number of Cavalier poets who were especially interested in the revival of classical learning and focused primarily on secular topics.¹² Despite his calling as poet-priest, Herrick claims as his poetic father not John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, or George Herbert, who served in a rural parish in Wiltshire, but rather Ben Jonson, appointed Poet Laureate by King James I in 1616. While less than popular as a dramatist writing for the public stage, Jonson enjoyed great success as a writer of court masques and even greater honor as the poet whom a number of younger writers—Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling, Thomas Carew, and Herrick—considered as their primary literary influence. Jonson, whom Herrick calls "the rare Arch-poet" ("Upon M. Ben. Jonson. Epig." 1), greatly influenced Herrick's style, with many of the younger writer's poems clearly engaging with the themes that the elder poet explored.¹³

A self-styled member of the "Tribe of Ben," Herrick included several poems about Jonson in *Hesperides*, and in each of these Herrick makes clear the influence of Jonson on his own writing.¹⁴ In "His Prayer to Ben Jonson," for example, Herrick elevates him to the status of pagan deity and patron of poets: "Know I have praid thee, / For old Religions sake / Saint Ben to aid me" (1–4). While prayer is involved, these are not the orisons of the Church of England, but rather of the old religion: one that sports a vast list of saints or possibly pagan deities to which Jonson is added as Herrick's special object of devotion. This prayer to Jonson, then,

¹⁰ See Ann Baynes Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides and the Epigram Book Tradition* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1998), 8.

¹¹ *The Noble Numbers* (see note 1), 271 mostly short poems on spiritual subjects, follows the two volumes of secular poems in *Hesperides*.

¹² The term Cavalier poet refers to a group of seventeenth-century writers who supported Charles I in the royalist cause, and produced largely secular poetry. While the majority were courtier-soldiers who were more intimately involved in the politics of the court, Herrick was a commoner with no direct connection to the political world save his brief connection with the Duke of Buckingham. For a comprehensive overview of the Cavalier poets, see *Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, ed. Claude J. Summers (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1982).

¹³ For a more comprehensive discussion of Jonson's influence on Herrick, see Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides* (see note 10), especially 104–09.

¹⁴ These poems include "Upon M. Ben Jonson. Epig," "Another," "His Prayer to Ben Jonson," "An Ode for Him," "A Bacchanalian Hymn," and "Another."

acknowledges the elder poet's own art while, at the same time, acknowledging his function as a possible source of Herrick's inspiration. He pleads:

Make the way smooth for me,
When I, thy *Herrick*,
Honoring thee, on my knee
Offer my *Lyrick*. (5–8)

Jonson serves not only as the saint to whom Herrick will pray for aid in his poetic art, but also functions as the deity on the receiving end of Herrick's final offering; moreover, with his promise in the concluding stanza to make Jonson a "new Altar" (12), Herrick recasts himself as poet-acolyte very much outside of a consciously Christian context.

The majority of Herrick's poetry rejects a spiritual poetics,¹⁵ instead embracing the model offered by Jonson, with the elder poet's engagement with classical authors and modes of writing clearly evidenced in *Hesperides*. Like Jonson, Herrick experimented with the epigram, a brief and clever form mastered by the Latin poet Martial, explored the Roman's treatment of conviviality — with Jonson's "Inviting a Friend to Supper" undoubtedly inspiring Herrick's many musings on that subject — and produced patronage poems that acknowledge aristocratic authority through a survey of the patron's power, wealth, and hospitality. Jonson's most famous poem in this vein is "To Penshurst," addressed to the Earl of Leicester, Sir Robert Sidney, which can be most accurately categorized as a country house poem as its subject is the family seat, Penshurst Place. "To Penshurst" bears a relation to Herrick's poem "The Hock-Cart; or Harvest Home. To the Right Honorable Mildmay, Earl of Westmoreland," which celebrates the bounty of the aristocratic landowner through the hospitable celebrations provided for the laborers on the final day of the harvest.

In emulating Jonson, Herrick explores classical forms and themes, mostly from Roman authors, from the convivial modes of Catullus and Horace to the georgic of the Greek poet Hesiod and Virgil.¹⁶ Aspects of the georgic most interesting to

¹⁵ For discussion of religious themes in his largely secular volume, see Achsah Guibbory's "Enlarging the limits of the 'Religious Lyric': the Case of Robert Herrick's *Hesperides*" and "*Hesperides*, the Hebrew Bible, and Herrick's Christian Identity," *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800* (Vol. 145), ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2008), 169–77 and 234–46.

¹⁶ Alastair Fowler notes that earlier seventeenth century treatments of country life were perhaps more influenced by Hesiod than they were by Virgil. Hesiod's *Works and Days* was first translated into English by George Chapman under the title *Georgics* in 1614, while John Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Georgics* did not appear until 1697. While Fowler notes that both Hesiod and Virgil's treatments of this genre have much in common, Hesiod tended to focus in greater detail on the subjects of "hospitality . . . and the happy life of retirement," themes of particular interest to Herrick. See Fowler, "Georgic and Pastoral: Laws of Genre in the Seventeenth Century," *Culture*

Herrick are the valorization of good husbandry and thrift, and these attributes find their place alongside the idea of the *convivium*, the Roman banquet in which friends gathered to enjoy good food, wine, and poetry.¹⁷ In “An Ode for Him,” another poem for Jonson, Herrick acknowledges his investment in the idea of secular conviviality within a specifically poetic community.¹⁸ Speaking directly to Jonson, Herrick exhorts him to

Say how or when
 Shall we thy guests
 Meet at those *Lyrick* Feasts,
 Made at the *Sun*,
 The *Dog*, the triple *Tunne*?
 Where we such clusters had,
 As made us nobly wild, not mad;
 And yet each verse of thine
 Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine. (1–10)

These “Lyrick feasts,” convened in London taverns, give the immediate sense of the consumption of poetry alongside food and drink. Herrick’s ode emphasizes Jonson’s hospitality as host to a score of guests enjoying one of presumably many “clusters” or gatherings that end in the familiar activity of the poetic reading—in this particular text, with the master providing fitter sustenance to his guests through the dissemination of his poetry than the usual fare of “meate” and “wine” offered by the tavern keepers.

In “An Ode for Him” Herrick also introduces the idea of poetic husbandry, picking up the familiar themes of the georgic and its preoccupation with good management in an agrarian setting. As Andrew McRae notes, Herrick’s landscape poetry “offers a subdued yet sustained argument of rural labor and improvement,”¹⁹ and these themes frequently find their way into poems not specifically about rural spaces. In the second stanza of Herrick’s address to Jonson, he begs the more accomplished poet to “come agen / Or send to us / Thy wit’s great over-plus” (12–14), as if the gatherers, in the great poet’s absence, are famished for poetic victuals. Here, however, the husbandry focuses on art, not

and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 81–88; 86.

¹⁷ In addition to classical writers, Herrick may also have draw on Desiderius Erasmus’s “The Poetic Feast” in *Colloquies*, which was first printed in 1518 (*The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965]).

¹⁸ For a more extended reading of this and other poems treating the subject of conviviality, see the essays in *‘Lords of Wine and Oile’: Community and Conviviality in the Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. Ruth Connolly and Tom Cain (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ See Andrew McRae, “Landscape and Property in Seventeenth-Century Poetry,” *Sydney Studies in English* 20 (1994–1995): 36–62; here 56

tillage, with Herrick exhorting Jonson to “teach us yet / Wisely to husband it; / Lest we that Tallent spend” (14–16), suggesting fear of poetic gluttony and, thus, the careless spending of one’s talent.

Additionally, Jonson’s wit is described as “precious stock” and a valuable “store” (19) that the world is not likely to experience again. The idea of Jonson’s wit as a prized reserve, then, suggests the frugality and good husbandry that his poetic followers must practice in their own art if they are to emulate him, and Herrick is careful to convey in stanza one that these gatherings of food, poetry, and drink are not a riot of gluttonous banqueting, but rather an occasion that renders himself and his fellow poets “nobly wild” (7). While the first stanza recalls these treasured gatherings, the second acknowledges the loss of both the poet and his art. The London tavern is a space in which the poet, surrounded by other poets, can feast on great art and perhaps be inspired himself. Although this particular poem only alludes to London taverns rather than the city itself, it betrays a longing for another time and place that, for Herrick, simply cannot, at least according to the bulk of his rural poems, be duplicated in the country.

2. Herrick on the Country

Despite Herrick’s preoccupations with things that he suggests only the city can offer—conviviality, wit, and poetic community—in “The Argument of His Book,” Herrick makes clear that he will orient a good part of his collection toward nature, declaring he will sing “of Brooks, of Blossoms, Birds, and Bowers” (1). Yet Herrick’s discomfiture with the natural world is immediately betrayed by the fact that many poems are hardly about the natural world at all. Flowers, for example, function as stereotypical substitutes for young women and reflect on the activities of human society. Predictably, they evoke female beauty, lurking in maidens’ cheeks, and they are evocative of female chastity, both of the quickly fading type (“To the Virgin’s to Make Much of Time” and “The Cruel Maid”) and the threatened variety, sometimes even drooping like “newly ravished virgins” (“The Sadness of Things for Sappho’s Sickness,” 4). More whimsically, flowers are also the offspring of lovers who kiss, dropping to the ground to engender new varieties of flowers (“On Gilly-Flowers Begotten”). Birds fare about the same, singing “matins” (“Corinna’s Going a Maying”), emulating coupled lovers (“To his Valentine on St. Valentine’s Day”), and proving fair weather friends to the poet when they abandon him in winter (“To His Maid, Prew”).

While flowers and birds serve to render more intelligible and ornament human behavior and relations, other entities of the natural world provide far less flattering comparison between human society and nature. Herrick’s descriptions of rivers anticipate the more naturalistic landscape poetry that would be explored

by Abraham Cowley in the later part of the seventeenth century²⁰ and, much later, by the Romantic poets, yet they provide not praise but rather censure. For example, the river, for Herrick, signals not the beauty of nature but rather its hostility. In "To Dean Bourn, A Rude River in Devon, By Which He Sometime Lived," nature is described once again in human terms, with the local estuary's "warty incivility" (2) likened to its neighboring humans who are "currish; churlish as the seas; / And rude (almost) as the rudest salvages" (11–12), and whom Herrick seems eager to turn his back on. The river's rudeness, however, is exceeded by that of mankind, but no less volatile for its inability to master itself. In his brutal portrait of the river, Herrick conveys the rough humanity of the Devonshire inhabitants, who appear equally unmanageable and uncivilized. Moreover, he positions himself as an outsider, one whose observations about the unforgiving harshness of the river compliments the very rudeness of the people he encounters. In his equation of the crude river with rude people, Herrick reminds us that he is entirely out of place, both geographically and socially, in the world he presently inhabits.

Although many of Herrick's encounters with nature are only seen through their uncanny ability to mimic human characteristics, he also explored, in greater detail, man's attempt to master the land itself. While the rage for pastoral with its simplistic, leisurely representations of shepherds had largely faded by the time Herrick began composing his poems, the georgic mode, which concerned itself more particularly with the activities associated with agriculture, was on the rise.²¹ Alastair Fowler reminds us that in the sixteenth century Sir Philip Sidney rejected the *Georgic* as a poetic mode precisely because, being about real life, it "lacked fictionality," and the seventeenth century may well have abandoned this old form of the pastoral because it evidenced too much fiction: "it was regarded as an allegorical form, high masked as low."²²

²⁰ Cowley was especially interested in agricultural topics, evidenced by his prose essay, "Of Agriculture," his poem "The Garden," and his translations of Virgil and Horace. McRae notes that Cowley proposed an English agricultural college modeled on the *Georgics* in 1561 and was elected to the "Georgical Committee" of the Royal Society in 1664. See McRae, "Landscape and Property" (see note 14), 61–62; and Douglas Chambers, "'Wild Pastorall Encounter': John Evelyn, John Beale and the Renegotiation of Pastoral in the Mid-Seventeenth Century," *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1992), 173–94; here 184–85.

²¹ Annabel Patterson has noted the Jacobean tendency to analyze political conflict in relation to Virgil's *Eclogues*. By the 1630s, however, the "virgilian didactic" was all but suppressed at the court of Charles I, where the pastoral functioned as a successful representational tool only if it quelled debate on Stuart political policy. See Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 140–48.

²² See Fowler, *Georgic and Pastoral* (see note 16), 86–87.

As Douglas Chambers points out, the Civil War not only vanquished the fading pastoral and chivalric mythologies perpetuated at the court of Charles I, but also led to the destruction of the excessively idealized landscape, instead inspiring works like John Evelyn's 1664 *Sylva*, which created a "new myth of patriotic husbandry to a country seeking to heal the wounds of divisions."²³ As Anthony Low has argued, attitudes toward the Georgic were to some extent informed by the ideological position of the writer: "By and large . . . Cavalier poets were inclined to see anything georgic as increasingly ugly, base, and threatening to what they valued whereas Puritan poets treated georgic as fruitful, progressive, and beneficial to an emerging nation."²⁴ While a great deal of pastoral fictionality exists in Herrick's treatment of flowers and birds, there is far less in his actual depictions of mankind living in a country setting, where he pays attention to the burden of daily labor and, more importantly, the relationship between landowner and tenant. While Low points out that Herrick, who has a little of the Puritan about him, never fully embraces the georgic as a political statement, he does offer it as a "substitute for pastoral," with the pipe-playing shepherd supplanted by "the owner stroll[ing] about and supervis[ing] his workers."²⁵

Herrick's work fits, then, with Raymond Williams's notion of the counter-pastoral, which rejects the pastoral definition offered by Alexander Pope at the beginning of the next century—"exposing the best side only of a shepherd's life, and in concealing its miseries"—and, instead, offers a more "prolonged and detailed description of the farmer's year; of his tools, his methods . . . his lifetime efforts."²⁶ Herrick is certainly at his best when he is celebrating the actual life of the countryside, most notably in "The Hock-Cart; or Harvest Home" but also in "The Country Life, To the Honored M. End. Porter," where rural existence has the potential to be both bountiful and joyous, at least for the man who manages to master himself, the land, or those who labor on his behalf.

McRae notes, particularly with regard to "The Country Life," Herrick's tendency to validate representations that "underpin the profits and pleasures of the lord's life,"²⁷ which, as Williams acknowledges, leads to the "threat of loss and eviction" for the rural tenant.²⁸ As a Royalist, Herrick predictably upholds the aristocratic

²³ See Chambers, "'Wild Pastorell Encounter'" (see note 20), 175 and 183.

²⁴ See Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 263.

²⁵ See Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (see note 24), 272.

²⁶ See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 17–19; Leah Marcus also notes Herrick's tendency to reject the Elizabethan pastoral tendency to ignore the harsh realities of physical labour in "The Hock-Cart." See Marcus, "Politics and Pastoral: Writing the Court on the Countryside," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 139–59: 155.

²⁷ See McRae, "Landscape and Property" (see note 14), 59.

²⁸ See Williams, *The Country and the City* (see note 26), 17.

landowner's values, yet at the same time his representations of country life attempt, in some ways, to represent the experience of country people and their conditions of existence, as well as the threats to that existence, in a manner that invites the reader's reflection.

"The Hock-Cart" offers a celebration of the end of the Harvest season, with the Hock-cart being the final cart to bring the crop out from the fields.²⁹ The poem focuses largely on the celebration of that event, the generous banquet offered by the lord to his workers, and the time allotted those workers for a well-deserved hiatus from their toils. The poem explicitly acknowledges that the lords benefit from the diligent labor of the workers: it commences, "Come Sons of Summer, by whose toile, / We are the Lords of Wine and Oile" (1–2), with the speaker of the poem positioning himself as one of the lords who is well satisfied to see the work successfully completed. Although the banquet provided is a reward for the laborers, the Hock-cart itself, traditionally decorated in a gay fashion, is prepared by the farm hands for the lord's entertainment (7–14). The poem invites the aristocratic landowner to survey both his property and the individuals who labor upon it, from the cart itself to "the Rout / Of Rurall Younglings" who "raise the shout" (15–16) of celebration that their toil is complete. After prayers and some merriment, the address shifts to the "brave boyes" (26), directing them to gaze upon the fare offered them: "Fat Beefe" (29), "Mutton, Veale / And Bacon" (30–31), complimented by "Custard" and "Pie" (33), and, finally, "smirking Wine" (36). The bounty placed before them, then, should reflect not only the just reward for their diligent labors, but also the hospitality and goodness of the landowner in offering his thanks.

In the end, "The Hock-Cart" draws a sharp distinction between the tenant and the aristocrat, one that, whether Herrick is critical of this vast class difference or not, certainly fits with his reputation as a Royalist poet who largely upheld the social order in poems directly addressing authoritative figures. These hard working young men are being given their due rights by their grateful lord, but Herrick's speaker reminds them that this day of holiday will be short lived: "And know . . . ye must . . . / . . . all goe back unto the Plough / And Harrow, (though

²⁹ Of Herrick's poems on rural activities and daily life, "The Hock-Cart" is the one that has received the most, although often brief, critical attention, from both literary scholars and historians. See Richard E. Hughes, "Herrick's 'Hock-Cart': Companion Piece to Corinna's Going a Maying," *College English* 27. 5 (Feb. 1966): ; Williams, *The Country and the City* (see note 26), 33–34; Alan Fischler, "Herrick Holy Hedonism," *Modern Language Studies*, 13.2 (Spring 1983): 12–20; Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (see note 24), 144–45 and 268–69; Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides* (see note 10), 156–58, 170; Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (see note 24), 144–45; Jacqueline Simpson, "The Mawkin on Herrick's Hock-Cart," *Rural History* 6 (1995): 1–9. For a more general discussion of Harvest-time representations, see Liana Vardi, "Imagining the Harvest in Early Modern Europe," *The American Historical Review* 101.5 (December 1996): 1357–97.

they'r hang'd up now)" (47–50). Although the season draws to a close, the worker is contractually bound to serve his lord in the following harvest: "And, you must know your Lords word's true, / Feed him ye must, whose food fills you" (51–52). Although this relationship is reciprocal, the burden falls more on the laborer, who is only afforded one single day of celebration as reward for his labor within the scope of the poem. James Grantham Turner suggests that "Country people are reduced to a state of not even knowing that whether they are happy or miserable" in this poem and their "happiness is a property of the poet."³⁰ Yet in choosing to represent the lavish feast of laborers only to remind them their claim to enjoy such a celebration depends on their willingness to both serve and be mastered, Herrick actually draws attention to the potential for lack of true hospitality and generosity in the lord-tenant contract. Ultimately, the lord determines the happiness of his tenants, as he has the power to discipline or evict those who refuse to honor the system.

In other poems that represent rural life, Herrick concerns himself not with the specific details of daily life for the laborer, nor with the vast differences between those who work the land and those who own the land, but rather with the man who leaves the city and all its complexities to seek his happiness in the country. Here the individuals in question are not the aristocratic landowners whose power we might assume one such as Herrick could envy, but rather those who seek life in the country as an alternative to the struggle against the daily challenges of city life. "A Country Life: To His Brother, Mr. Tho. Herrick," is addressed to Herrick's eldest brother, also formerly apprenticed to his goldsmith uncle, who left London around 1610 to experience life as a gentleman farmer. Like another poem, "His Content in the Country," to which I will return later, Herrick's poem of advice for his own brother marks the quiet rural life as the perfect opportunity to abandon one's desires, however slight they may be, for material wealth and worldly fame and replace them with contentment in plain living. "The Countries sweet simplicity" (4), according to Herrick, provides the ideal setting "To teach Man to confine desires / And know, that Riches have their proper stint / In the contented mind, not mint" (16–18).

The country is a place in which mankind, freed from the burdens of city life, can learn to master past desires and develop a philosophy of contentment rather than want. As a refuge from the temptations of city life, the country is an ideal setting for those who wish to gain the self-knowledge that often eludes the city dweller frequently bound to the demands of society: "to live round, and close, and wisely true / To thine own selfe; and knowne to few" (135–36). Herrick advises Thomas, further, to "let thy Rurall Sanctuary be / *Elizium* to they wife and thee" (137–38).

³⁰ See James Grantham Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Verse, 1630–60* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 180.

For a man attracted to worldly riches, then, or eager for fame, the country acts as an appropriate corrective, where one can know oneself and “live blest” (141) rather than live cursed by the unattainable desires that the city engenders.

For the man of humble desires and unambitious nature, the country provides the appropriate backdrop for the simple pleasures of life, particularly for those who understand that to “live blest” is not necessarily to thrive economically. In fact, it seems the perfect place to foster what becomes the subject of the second book of Virgil’s *Georgics*: the happy man. Those “happy tillers of the soil,” however, know not “their blessedness,” nor, perhaps, their good fortune in being free from “lofty palace portal-proud.”³¹ The Stoic acceptance that Herrick teaches his brother is furthered in “Larr’s portion and the Poet’s Part,”³² where Herrick acknowledges that however little man may have, it is sufficient if it sustains him and allows him to make an offering of thanks to his God:

At my homely Country-seat,
I have there a little wheat;
Which I work to Meal, and make
Therewithall a *Holy-cake*:
Part of which I give to Larr

(1–5)

The “Poet’s Part,” at least in the country, is to prove for his own needs through his own household labor, displaying the good husbandry (without, of course, the actual farm labor associated with the harvest itself) that is the familiar theme of the georgic. Additionally, in offering a part of his cake to Lar, the figurine representative of the Roman hearth god, Herrick reminds the reader that however much man may need his bread, his need must be measured against the deity’s need for recognition by the human suppliant. The country is the ideal locale for the humble contemplative, the man, like Herrick’s brother Thomas, for whom the simple life ultimately outweighs in value, at least in the Christian view, the worldly pleasures of the city. For Herrick, however, this land in which such personal ambitions as wealth, or, in his case, fame, are held in check is not necessarily the ideal setting for creative production, especially given that it is as a poet and not as a man of God that he makes his humble offering.

³¹ See Virgil, *Georgics*, *Project Gutenberg* (March 10, 2008 [<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/232>]; last accessed on Dec. 29, 2011), 101–02.

³² Low points out that the georgic is an effective substitute for the pastoral in that it is more adaptable to Herrick’s treatment of the theme of Stoic retreat. See Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (see note 24), 273.

3. Herrick as Equivocator

Although *Hesperides* includes a relatively small number of poems expressing disdain for country life, they provide a sharp contrast to his other poems that either detail “country” rituals or suggest rural space is ideal for those who are thoughtful and devout. Herrick is even willing to praise outright his own experience in the country, although he does so in a manner that somewhat exaggerates his own material reality. In “His Content in the Country,” for instance, he comments on the rudeness of his table with great geniality:

Though ne’r so mean the Viands be,
They well content my *Prew*³³ and me.
Or Pea, or Bean, or Wort, or Beet,
What-ever comes, content makes sweet (3–6)

This fare is far humbler than that splendid table offered the workers in the “The Hock-Cart,” yet it offers daily sustenance to the man of slender means and few worldly needs. Later in the poem, Herrick, with great pride, notes both that “we feed on no mans score” (14) and “pitie those, whose flanks grow great, / Swel’d with the Lard of others meat” (15–16). In asserting his (and Prew’s) superiority to the landowner who lives off of the labor of his tenants, Herrick seems to be siding with the workers of “The Hock-Cart,” yet, in doing so, he somewhat misrepresents his position. After all, a vicar depends upon the church and its parishioners for his sustenance, and, according to Cain, while the living at Dean Prior was by no stretch lucrative, it was ranked within the top 25% of its day.³⁴

In contrast to the poverty he experienced after leaving Dean Prior in 1647, Herrick seems to enjoy an embarrassment of riches during his rural sojourn. Perhaps we can forgive this overstatement of his frugality, however, given that it is contentedness with what the Lord offers that Herrick so seems to treasure: “We blesse our Fortunes” (17), he writes, and enjoy “Peacefull slumbers” (12) unknown to their fellow men and women. Just as in his poem to his brother, Thomas, “His Content in the Country” is very much about the business of living, both well and with material and spiritual satisfaction, regardless of one’s economic status or geographical location.

“His Content in the Country” offers an interesting contrast to the banqueting at London’s tavern that Herrick recalls with such pleasure in “An Ode to Him,” casts Herrick’s contentedness with limited humanity society as a legitimate substitute

³³ *Prew* is Prudence Baldwin, Herrick’s household servant at Dean Prior, whom he acknowledges in several poems, including “To His Maid, Prew,” “Upon Prew, His Maid, and “Upon her Sickness.”

³⁴ See Cain, “Robert Herrick’s Life” (see note 3), para. 15

for pleasure in poetic companionship. In "His Content in the Country," his companion is his maid, Prew, who, whether she dines at table with him or not, offers both a more singular and less intellectual companionship than an all-male group of fellow poets.³⁵ Thus "His Content in the Country" invites scrutiny of the extent and nature of Herrick's interactions with his fellow man and woman.

The extreme isolation he feels and blames on his rural existence, of course, is also a ruse, as a country vicar is continually taken up with pastoral duties of all kinds, from visiting parishioners to preaching sermons. And if the typical church-goer in his parish is not the ideal intellectual companion for the poet, Herrick did have other outlets for social and intellectual interaction during his initial service in Devon. The vicarage housed not only Prudence Baldwin, but also his sister-in-law, Elizabeth, widow to his younger brother, William, and her two children, and, possibly, his curate, William Greene. Sir Edwards Giles, the patron of the living at Dean Prior and a distant relation of Herrick's through marriage, lived nearby at Dean's Court, and other members of the community—including a group of Exeter lawyers, as well as his friend, James Smith, rector of King's Nympton in northern Devonshire—would have provided companionship of a less domestic and more intellectual variety.³⁶ The loneliness and isolation he represents within his poetry, then, is in stark contrast to the reality of regular interaction with family, co-workers, and friends.

Despite Herrick's humble, although exaggerated satisfaction with the country in "Larr's," he is quite capable of turning his hyperbole in the opposite direction, particularly when articulating the effects of the country on a city-born poet who clearly associates much that is of social and poetic value with the city. In fact, he may be far more appealing and entertaining within this comic register. As he writes in "Discontents in Devon," "More discontents I never had / Since I was born, than here" (1–2), followed by the even more mournful admission, "Where I have been, and still am sad, / in this dull Devon-shire" (3–4). The idea of associating rural space with "discontents" suggests both his frustration with the country and with himself, both in the dullness of his location and the pervasive sadness he continues to feel during his residence there. Moreover, his claim that he had never before experienced *such* dissatisfaction is an unreasonably strong censure of the rural, especially given his somewhat trying London childhood.

The tragic death of his father, separation from his mother, and challenging boyhood under the guardianship of a stingy uncle render Herrick's assertion that

³⁵ For more on Herrick's treatment of Baldwin, see Roger B. Rollins, "Robert Herrick's Housekeeper: Representing Ordinary Women in Renaissance Poetry," *Representing Women in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997) 201–15.

³⁶ See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), para. 14 and 18.

his life in the country was inferior to his city experiences an exaggeration born perhaps out of some truth, but likely more so out of poetic license.

Just when we think "Discontents in Devon" provides a coherent statement on country life and the feelings it produced, however, Herrick becomes equivocal, stating a nearly opposite position. While the first half of "Discontents" disparages the country, the second grudgingly acknowledges its virtues, engaging, of course, with the university tradition of disputation in which the undergraduate is directed to explore with equal weight both sides of the argument. Despite the melancholy note established in the first four lines, Herrick offers a bright side to rural life, claiming the country has in fact played a part in his development as a poet:

Yet justly too I must confesse;
I ne'r invented such
Ennobled numbers for the Presse,
Then where I loath'd so much

(5–8)

In the interests of justice, Herrick notes that the country *has* provided an opportunity for industrious poetic labor, during which time he has indeed written "such / Ennobled numbers for the Presse." Although we are unsure of the quantity of lines, they appear to exceed in quality those he produced when he was working at his craft as a resident of London. However much Herrick's speaker is still reluctant to fully embrace the country as his residence of choice, "Discontents in Devon" reveals, as do the poems on the positive attributes of country life, that poems, like other sustaining crops, can indeed be harvested there.

A poem such as "Discontents in Devon" further complicates both Herrick's position and his veracity. His reference to "Ennobled numbers" may well refer to "His Noble Numbers: Or, His Pious Pieces," which were included in *Hesperides*, but they may refer more broadly to the refinement of his art as a whole during his country residence. Despite this poetic claim, it is possible that in Devon the lines Herrick wrote may not have been especially "ennobled," and that they may have been relatively few in number as well. John Creaser lists only 30 poems—and the Noble Numbers are not among them—likely written during the period from 1630–1646, with not a single poem frequently anthologized in student editions.³⁷ Moreover, Creaser suggests that some of Herrick's most extant examinations of country life, such as "A Country-Life" and "The Hock-Cart" were likely written while Herrick was still apprenticed to his uncle in London or perhaps, later,

³⁷ The only anthologized poems written between 1630 and 1646, according to Creaser's dating, are "Upon His Spaniel Tracie," "Discontents in Devon," and "Upon Scobble," which are included in the more progressive Longman anthology but not in the Norton. See Creaser, "'Time trans-shifting': Chronology and the Misshaping of Herrick," *English Literary Renaissance* 39. 1 (Winter 2009): 163–96.

during his residence in Cambridge.³⁸ Nor do the subjects or associations connected with these two poems addressed to his elder brother and a patron depend on either an intimate knowledge of country practices or a Devonshire acquaintance with the poem's dedicatees. "Discontents in Devon," then, either represent a truth in contradiction to Herrick's other unflattering representations of his own reality, or its very equivocation suggests the playfulness with which Herrick at times explored the converse side of his pet subjects.

Although Herrick's references to the West Country suggest a definite "loathing," they provide an opportunity, sometimes disingenuous and always exaggerated, to reveal one of his most entertaining poetic personas: banished Londoner and thwarted poet. Just as his prolific musings on the subject of young women don't necessarily mark him as a debauched clergyman, so too should his comments on the rural as abject be seen as a creative, and frequently amusing, flexing of his poetic muscles. F. R. Leavis disparagingly referred to this playful quality as "Herrick's game," although Coiro more generously sees *Hesperides* as "a complex volume of jokes and dreams and miniature subversions."³⁹ As a game of continual equivocation, poems like "Discontent in Devon" reveal his deftness at playing both sides of the argument in a fashion that seems at times quite subversive: in so doing, Herrick makes revelations more about his values and desires as a poet than he does about his actual feelings toward the country. Given his difficulty in making up his mind about exactly where he stands on the rural question, in the end we share in the joke.

In many ways, then, Herrick's loathing of the country is highly rhetorical, yet at the same time, his poetic expressions of country loathing are nearly always associated with what for Herrick is a serious subject: how his rural environment negatively influences his work as an artist. Despite the rhetorical flexibility with which Herrick approaches so many of his poetic themes, his poems—diverse and contradictory as they are—have been so often used to define him, whether to fill in the scanty biographical details of his life or to attempt to pinpoint his political positions beyond the very broad, and thus not always helpful, category of "Royalist." John Creaser contends while presenting "*Hesperides* as a substantial sign of royalist allegiance on publication in 1648," has some merit, it "is hardly enough to establish the poet as politically sophisticated."⁴⁰ Sophisticated or not,

³⁸ Creaser dates "A Country Life" 1611–1612 and "The Hock-Cart" 1628–1630. Although many scholars accept that the former was written sometime in the 1610s, James Grantham Turner argues for a date as late as 1647 for the later. For Creaser's justification for his early dating of "The Hock-Cart," see "Time trans-shifting" (see note 37), 188.

³⁹ See Leavis, *Reevaluation* (see note 9), 40; and Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides* (see note 10), 6.

⁴⁰ John Creaser, "Herrick at Play," *Essays in Criticism* 56.4 (October 2006): 324–50; here 325. In this particular essay, Creaser also offers a critical assessment of recent approaches to Herrick's works (325–27).

nor do such readings convincingly paint a picture of Herrick as ideologically motivated in his writings.

Like Creaser I am more interested, ultimately, in exploring the pleasures of his text, especially the teasing contradictions and the playful debates that baffle the novice while delighting the more advanced reader. Yet despite this spirited disputation with the poetic self, particularly on the subject of the country, Herrick ultimately does offer a more consistently negative representation of the poet's discontentedness with his rural abode. And while such statements fail to render Herrick anything other than a sophisticated reader of culture and its classical precedents, it does help us better understand some cultural divisions, however exaggerated, perceived within artistic communities regarding the tensions between the country and the city, and the uses to which such divisions are put. Moreover, it is worth noting that in the poems which turn away from the country with an eye directed backwards toward London, Herrick almost forgets the precepts of good country living and rural contentedness that poems such as "A Country Life" so enthusiastically illustrate.

4. Rural Loathing

The poems that identify Herrick's rural location as "loathed," like "Discontents in Devon," are never concerned with the details that evoke country practices or experiences: in fact, the poems expressing loathing are more figurative than the more positive renderings of country life, which are more consistently descriptive. Instead, with the stark exception of the second half of "Discontents in Devon," the anti-rural texts focus on Herrick's almost relentless insistence that the countryside in which he resides has limited his poetic achievement. When Herrick is writing about the disadvantage of being a country dweller at a time when we can conceivably estimate he was actually in the country (or, after leaving Devon for London, able to reflect upon his rural experience),⁴¹ he nearly always does so in a manner that connects rural space with the diminishment (however exaggerated) of his own poetic power. Furthermore, in several poems that can be reasonably dated to the Dean Prior period, Herrick embraces the ideal of the city—an ideal, in fact, so idyllic as to almost resemble the old pastoral longing for the unchanging and uncomplicated world of another time and place. What Low calls "Virgil's georgic theodicy," which assumes that the georgic replaced the "primal Golden

⁴¹ John Creaser offers these dates for the poems discussed in this section: "His Lachrymae: Or Mirth turned to Mourning" (1630–1646), "To Sir Clipsby Crewe" (1630–1646) and "To the King, Upon his Coming With His Army into the West" (1644), "Upon Himself" (1630–1646) and "His Return to London" (1646–1647). See Creaser, "Time Trans-Shifting" (see note 37), 193–94.

age of pastoral ease and abundance," seems relevant here, with the city representing for Herrick a place in which the Golden age of "ease and abundance" is associated not with the fertility and industry of the country, but with London's poetic circles.⁴² In fact, when considering the difference between the country and the city, whether explicitly or implicitly, Herrick tends to set up points of conflict between the country as barren and the city as fruitful.

Several poems in *Hesperides* associate Herrick's representation of rural loathing with his own failure, however hyperbolically constructed it may be, as a poet. In "His Lachrymae: Or Mirth turned to Mourning," the speaker contrasts his present, dull poetics with the lively metropolitan art he displayed in times past:

Before I went
To banishment
Into the loathed West
I co'd rehearse
A Lyrick verse,
And speak it with the best (7–12)

Herrick perhaps associates his ability to "rehearse" poetry, and to "speak it with the best" to his post-Cambridge years, where his residence in London gave him access to poetic circles—particularly the one in which Ben Jonson was the center—where he could clearly hold his own among other writers and enjoyed some degree of success. Having come to the west, however, Herrick now mourns that "The mirth, that was / in me, is dead or ceast" (5–6), with his voice transformed from music "Into the noise / Of those that sit and weep" (17–18). As with "Discontent in Devon," the poet associates the country with sadness or lack of mirth, with the later deemed central to his poetic production and the very nature of poetry as he conceives it. Moreover, the idea of the country as a punitive exile, rather than as a temporary retreat (or source of inspiration) for the artist or the source of a competent living, provides a sharp complaint that the poet is no longer part of a artistic community in which poets can match wits through the trial run of their verses.

Not only does Herrick represent himself as exiled from a community of writers, he also sees this as a removal from the patronage system: those who have supported and praised him for his poetic efforts. In a poem to his former Cambridge classmate, friend, and patron Sir Clipsby Crew ("To Sir Clipsby Crew"), for example, he laments, "Since to th' Country first I came / I have lost my former flame" (1–2), and "If I write a verse or two / 'Tis with very much ado" (5–6). Although he goes on to describe himself "of Muse bereft" (9), Herrick bemoans not just the lack of inspiration or talent that troubles him, but that the

⁴² See Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (see note 24), 11.

effort required for the production of the most humble of verses, especially those in honor of a long-time friend and patron, has rendered him unfit to express his gratitude in poetry. The loss of patronage seems to have been of great concern to Herrick. Coiro reads this poem specifically as evidence that Herrick lost Crewe's patronage after he left London, and Cain suggests that the cessation of support was actually the result of a quarrel.⁴³ The final lines of the poem acknowledge that "I still have manners left" (10) to thank this revered friend, but that the poet can now only "Be in Prose a *gratefull* man" (14). That he can now only convey his indebtedness in prose seems to be proof that his Muse has abandoned him, with the exchange of the more exalted genre of poetry for the common, meanness of prose writing representing the ultimate artistic humiliation. Taken together, both of these poems reflect the poet's greatest fears: first, the failure to produce artistically, and, second, the inability to express through poetry the gratitude one owes one's patron.

While these anti-rural poems address specifically poetic anxieties, a later poem of the Dean Prior period connects residence in the West with a more general sense of unproductiveness and barrenness, which Herrick uses to account for a disappointing national event: Charles I's retreat into the West Country owing to the menace of parliamentary forces. In "To the King, Upon his Coming With His Army into the West," Herrick cleverly transforms a political necessity into a triumph for the thwarted monarch, as his retreat into the country becomes both a boon for that community and a means of regenerating rural space for the poet. "The Drooping West" (2) described as having suffered "one long-lamented-widow-hood" (4), is invigorated by the presence of the monarch, who now makes the country resemble "a Bride . . . or a bed of flowers, / Newly refresh't both by the Sun, and showers" (5-6). The poem functions as a mean of monarch-ego boosting, as Herrick deflects military failure by emphasizing the ways in which the king's presence will ennoble and refine the barren west. Yet, at the same time, this drooping, impotent country-side is clearly a representation that jars with Herrick's other treatments of the country as precisely the opposite: fecund, bountiful, and joyous, as evidenced in the country poem written for the Earl of Westmoreland. Although the country, whether in the abstract or in reality, provided for Herrick rich material for both compliment and complaint, his eschewal of rural life serves consistently to provide a contrast to the intellectual-political life he associates with London. In "Upon Himself" and "His Return to London," which Creaser dates to the Dean Prior period and shortly after Herrick left Devonshire respectively,⁴⁴ Herrick celebrates not only his return to his birthplace, but also characterizes his

⁴³ See Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides* (see note 9), 143; and Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), para. 26.

⁴⁴ See Creaser, "'Time Trans-Shifting'" (see note 37), 193, 196.

departure as a release from the Devon described earlier in such unflattering terms. In "Upon Himself," Herrick writes, once again, of the "loathed Country-life" (1), but he also expresses a desire to recover time lost in the country as he reclaims his place within a convivial brotherhood of fellow writers. Thus, he rouses himself to leave this loathed country life, and then

Grow up to be a Roman *Citizen*.
 Those mites of Time, which yet remain unspent,
 Waste thou in that most Civill Government.
 Get there comportment, and the gliding tongue
 Of those mild Men, thou art to live among:
 Then, being seated in that smother *Sphere*,
 Decree thy everlasting *Topick* there; (1-8)

Being a "Roman citizen" clearly connects to the "most civil government" practiced by "the gilding tongue[s] / Of those mild Men": the London poets Herrick left behind in 1630, whom the speaker eagerly anticipates rejoining. The closing lines of this poem—"And to the Farm-house nere return at all: / Though Granges do not love thee, Cities shall" (9-10)—express the explicit complaint he has about country life addressed above. While the inhabitants of Devon represent an unappreciative or insufficiently intellectual audience for his poetry, the "smother sphere" of the city will welcome him into a poetic community that will, finally, recognize his artistic worth and help him to restore his sense of himself as a poet.

While additional poems also concern themselves with the loss of poetic community or access to at least appreciative listeners (if not monetary patronage), they also highlight Herrick's nostalgia for his birthplace. In another piece on the subject, "His Return to London," Herrick complains of the "dull confines of the Drooping West" (1) and hopes to soon "see the day spring from the pregnant East" (2), naming London, which he addresses "O Fruitful Genius" (5), as the source of artistic production. This apostrophe reflects not only Herrick's excitement at the prospect of returning to his birthplace—"Ravish't in spirit I come, nay, more, I flie / To thee, blesst place of my Nativitie!" (3-4)—but also acknowledges that London is the most fitting place for his eventual burial: "Weak I am grown, and must in short time fall; / Give thou my sacred Relics Buriall" (19-20). This rhapsodic poem seems to reflect the fervor of a banished yet constant lover invited to return to the bosom of his patiently waiting beloved. Herrick specifically contrasts the evils of the country (or at least the negative feelings it evokes) with the satisfaction of what London has to offer. Some of the implied comparisons include London as "hallowed ground" (5), implying Dean Prior is unconsecrated, as a city of "everlasting plenty" (8) and thus and a true marker of metropolitan variety, contrasted with the barrenness of the West, and sporting "Manners! Fram'd to please / All Nations, Customs, Kindreds, Languages!" (9-10), highlighting the homogeneous limitations of Devonshire.

"His Return to London," like "Upon Himself," also connects London with Rome, a place that Herrick earlier associated with the "gliding" tongues of poets, and a city from which troublesome poets like Ovid were exiled.⁴⁵ In so particularly evoking Rome, Herrick figures Devonshire as a backward outpost, not unlike Ovid's Tomis, which cannot possibly measure up to the glittering image of his own birthplace. Here, however, the connection between London and his ability to recover his powers as a poet is less explicitly stated; instead, the speaker positions himself as a petitioner who asks leave not just to return, but to be received by his native city with enthusiasm.

I am a free-born *Roman*; suffer then,
That I amongst you live a Citizen.
London my home is: though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment;
Yet since cal'd back; henceforward let me be,
O native countrey, repossess by thee!
For, rather than I'll to the West return,
I'll beg of thee first to have mine Urn

(11–18)

Herrick figures himself as a banished citizen, eager to return to his native country, and willing, quite dramatically, to face death rather than any future banishment. Just as he wished in "To the King" to see the West embraced and impregnated by the civilizing presence of the monarch, which he associates with the East, here he reverses that amorous pattern, imploring that London reclaim him, perhaps through sufferance, as its own beloved possession. His reference to his "irksome banishment," the result of "hard fate" owing to some fabricated transgression, dramatizes both the loss and the potential gain as he reenters London as a formerly chastened, but now newly reformed individual who has served a kind of penance.⁴⁶

Herrick's repossession by London demands one final observation about poetic conviviality, particularly as it relates to class differences in early modern England. While the rural world of the "The Hock-Cart" draws attention to (although perhaps not reinforcing) social hierarchy, the city tavern filled with poets does not. Even though Herrick, the man (of God), seems content with being a Royal (and spiritual) subject, Herrick the poet figures himself as a citizen: one among equals

⁴⁵ For additional readings of this poem, see also Coiro, *Robert Herrick's Hesperides* (see note 10), 207–08; for a discussion of Herrick's work within the context of the exiled poet, see Syrithe Pughe, "Ovidian Exile in the *Hesperides*: Herrick's Politics of Intertextuality," *Review of English Studies* 57 (November 2006): 733–65.

⁴⁶ For an alternative reading of this poem, one that explores traces that render the poet's return to London tragic, see Claude J. Summers, "Herrick's Political Counterplots," *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 25.1 (Winter 1985): 165–82; here 167–71.

in the city, after having been one long set apart in the inhospitable country. Rome then becomes an ideal because even though its social world promoted a sharp conceptual distinction between plebian and patrician, being a poet—whether in Rome or in London—offers a special kind of status: one filled with challenges and, potentially, dangers, such as censure or even exile, but also one in which the goldsmith's son can (and did) rise to the occasion of intellectual commerce in the company of fellow poets who, unlike Herrick, were actually a bit higher on the social scale. The ability to “rehearse lines” while sharing in a cup of sack with other citizens—some novices, like he himself had been in the 1620s, others, like Jonson, fully established in their art and invested in the patronage system—has a kind of leveling effect for Herrick, making his status as humble vicar irrelevant to his citizenship in the world of letters.

However much Herrick might vilify the poet's place in the country, the terms on which he left Devonshire and repaired to London contain a tragic irony. On the one hand, Herrick's initial “banishment” from London removed him from the poetic circles he depended upon for inspiration and acknowledgment. On the other, that appointment, which was in the monarch's power to bestow, was a mark not only of favor (or possibly the power of one of Herrick's patrons), but also of the prosperity and the stability of the king's government, and provided Herrick with financial stability. As a royalist, Herrick's return to London must have been bittersweet as it was necessitated by the fall of Charles I's government, and was accompanied by personal impoverishment.

With most of his old patrons dead, except Mildmay Fane, Herrick lived, somehow, upon charity, perhaps from his brother Nicholas, a Levant merchant, or other relatives.⁴⁷ Herrick's temporary release from country life—not to mention the duties of the vicarage—undoubtedly gave him the freedom to ennoble further the “press” with a collection of his own poetic outpourings. Banishment, it would seem, allowed him to reflect on his waning art, while his release enabled him to “reclaim” his Muse, collect his writings, and, in offering them to the readers of London, to “have mine Urn.”

Of course Herrick would eventually return to the country to live out the remainder of his life in the service of the same country vicarage that, at least poetically, was the site of such contrary analytics and emotions on a variety of subjects beyond country living. Upon his return to Devonshire, however, he was the published author of a volume of poems, had reconnected with old London associates, and, nearly seventy years of age, was perhaps ready to resume his old office as vicar with less poetic grumblings. While returning to Devonshire late in

⁴⁷ See Cain, “Robert Herrick's Life” (see note 3), para. 25 and 26.

life—especially after a long and economically unfruitful sojourn in London—may have tempered his views of the country and what it had to offer, there are only a few poems that survive the period after which he left London to make Dean Prior his final residence.⁴⁸ Whether he revised his views of country life or not, the handful of post-London poems do not take up the country as thematic concern, so Herrick's views on the country exist only in a dozen or so poems that represent both the good and the bad, leaving readers to contemplate which viewpoint carries the greatest rhetorical power within the notoriously slippery medium of poetry. That Herrick could respond to rural spaces with both the contemplative Stoicism inspired by classical writers and with the disappointment of a man enamored with the artistic circles of London is evidence of his great flexibility of mind, intellectual astuteness, and often clever hyperbole, all of which are among the many reasons we still find his poems engaging, thoughtful, and humorous in the twenty-first century.

⁴⁸ See Cain, "Robert Herrick's Life" (see note 3), para. 27.

Chapter 26

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Women at the Hunt: Developing a Gendered Logic of Rural Space in the Netherlandish Visual Tradition

Around mid-seventeenth century a number of surprisingly vigorous and violent, gender-reversing paintings of women hunting occur in Netherlandish art. These women are depicted riding energetically through the rural environment trapping birds and even spearing large game. While depictions of women at the hunt were not new to the western art tradition—certainly there are numerous medieval and Renaissance examples in a variety of art media from tapestries to book illuminations to prints—these predecessors do not prepare us for the amazing Amazonian ferocity of the huntresses found in paintings by Netherlandish artists like Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668), Hendrick Verschuring (1627–1690), and particularly Abraham Hondius (ca. 1631–1691). While such aggressive female action is astonishing, an even more overt presentation of women transgressing the traditional boundaries of their sex is to be found in paintings by Pieter van Laer (1599–ca. 1642), Johannes Lingelbach (1622–1674), Jan Miel (1599–1663), and Willem Reuter (ca. 1642–1681) where huntresses sport male trousers in a surprisingly modern example of cross-dressing. An examination of the changing gendered logic of rural space as it relates to the development of hunting scenes is enlightening in regards to these images.

Medieval and Renaissance Views of the Hunt and Rural Space

“Man needs to hunt to release the pressures of being human, to appreciate the countryside, the seasons, to be aware of the beauty and brevity of life, and the inevitability and sadness of death. He needs to be barbaric in order to be civilized,

cruel to be cultured."¹ These are the conclusions reached by Richard Almond in his excellent survey of medieval and Renaissance visual and textual references to hunting in the wilds of nature. Indeed, hunting was an important aspect of medieval and Renaissance culture, as is witnessed by the numerous texts written by hunters and collected by the aristocracy. Many of the early authors on hunting were French and their texts set the standard for European hunting manuals. Among these texts, Gaston Phoebus's book was one of the most influential.² Early in his life Gaston had been a warrior, after which he retired to his estates where he spent his remaining years hunting. In his *Livre de la chasse* (Book of the Hunt, 1387–1389), he declares that the three delights of his life are war, love, and hunting.³ The book is dedicated to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and contains a detailed discussion of the nature of all types of beasts, how to hunt them, and what weapons to use. Some copies of Gaston's text are lavishly illustrated with images of men of the ruling classes hunting while men of the lower classes facilitate the chase as in a scene of a wolf hunt (Fig. 1). Here, the two nobles dynamically gallop through the landscape in active pursuit of the fleeing wolf. One has drawn his sword as he descends on his prey while his servants ready their spears to complete the kill. In the illustration of a boar hunt, the nobles have caught up with their large kill as they plunge their swords into the still-charging beast (Fig. 2). More violence is displayed in the foreground where diminutive servants capture and stab a smaller boar with a pike.⁴

Art of the hunt was commissioned by, and produced for, royal and aristocratic men. It reinforced socio-economic structures of the time by depicting the bravery and skill of the elitist manly hunters in contrast to the humble activities of the commoners. Regarding these scenes of untamed combat in the wilds of nature, Almond summarizes that medieval and Renaissance men were fascinated by hunting and images of the chase. Such images, he asserts, represented the needs

¹ Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003), 174. Other texts on medieval hunting include John G. Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Linda Woolley, *Medieval Life and Leisure in the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries* (London: V & A, 2002); Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Chris M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Robin S. Oggins, *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

² See Jacqueline Stuhmiller's contribution to this volume. Other medieval hunting texts of significance include Frederick II, *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* (1240s); Charles IX (1550–1574), *La chasse royale*; Alfonso XI of Castile, *Libro de la montería* (fourteenth century); *Les livres du roi Modus et de la reine Ratio* (1354–1376), attributed to Henri de Ferrières; Gace de la Buigne, *Le Roman des Deduis* (before 1377); Edward, Duke of York, *The Master of Game* with translations from and additions to *Livre de la chasse* (1406–1413).

³ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, *Livre de la chasse*, MS fr. 616 (no article in the BN catalogue).

⁴ See Albrecht Classen's contribution to this volume (*Book of Hours*).

of men to be “at one with nature” and to delight in the pleasure, ceremony, excitement, energy, and rigor of this sport.⁵

If freedom to loose one’s wild instincts in the taming of nature, as well as the ability to display ostentatiously one’s social and economic status were the meanings behind depictions of men at the hunt in rural space, what was the place of women in relation to nature and the hunt? Certainly women were not represented engaging in the violence, battling, and rigor of the active hunt except in rare instances during these early eras. At times women were represented with birds of prey or trapping small animals, but even in these instances they are usually depicted with stately decorum rather than turbulent ferocity.⁶ Typical of the genteel behavior of huntresses is a depiction of Diana, goddess of the hunt, and her maidens from a copy of Christine de Pizan’s *Epistle of Othea* of about 1450 (Fig. 3).⁷ Diana’s hounds stand calmly beside her, and she carries no weapons. Only one of the women carries a bow, which she aims toward the fleeing stag. None of the women display an active and eager participation in the chase; instead, their composed demeanors, graceful postures, and fine dress are reminiscent of elegant females depicted in many contemporary courtly scenes. The few instances in which ladies are shown actually shooting or trapping animals are considered by some to be either satirical or allegorical representations of the “upside-down world” where women are acting contrary to the nature of their gender.⁸

⁵ Almond, *Hunting* (see note 1).

⁶ Almond discusses the curious lack of an interest in females hunting in either texts or images from the medieval and Renaissance eras. Instead, he states that women were conveyed in art and literature in an idealized fashion as a decorative and admiring audience of the hunt. He also states that the only common representation of women at the hunt was in regards to falconry in *Hunting*, 143–66 (see note 1). In his survey of medieval hunting, Cummins also concludes that it was a rarity for women to be involved in anything but the ceremony of the hunt in *Hound and the Hawk* 8 (see note 1).

⁷ The original text was published in ca. 1400. The copy is located in The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, *Epistle of Othea*, 74 G 27, fol. 59r.

⁸ Veronica Sekules discusses images of huntresses from the *Taymouth Hours* as significations of the “world turned upside-down” tradition in “Women and Art in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, ed. Jonathan James Graham Alexander, and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts: Published in association with Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 41–48. Richard Almond elaborates on his discussions of women hunting in a later text, *Daughters of Artemis: The Huntress in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2009). He argues that women certainly must have been involved in hunting even though the evidence is very scant. He includes in his discussion of literary and visual hunting examples, however, hawking, ferreting, and trapping, none of which involve the very rigorous hunting sport of men. Katharina Fietze also argues for the reality of women hunting during the Middle Ages in *Im Gefolge Dianas: Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 99 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2005). Much of the visual evidence used by these authors comes from two unique texts consistently used in discussions of medieval women hunting: the *Taymouth Hours* and the *Queen*

Apart from such mythological and allegorical exceptions, most images linking women, nature, and the hunt were of a very different character. Primarily, women were simply decorative, aristocratic embellishment standing on the sidelines cheering on the sport of the hunters or amorously riding sidesaddle behind their heroic gentlemen, as in the hawking calendar miniature of the month of August from the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry of about 1415 (Fig. 4).⁹ The elegantly-dressed and gracefully-postured aristocratic riders in the foreground are distinctly separated from the boorish peasant workers and swimmers in the background. The male courtiers all sport falcons on their wrists—a certain indication of social status. The horses walk at a calm pace appropriate to the delicacy of the two graceful female riders seated sidesaddle behind their champions. Similarly, a print by the Housebook Master of the late fifteenth century shows young nobles engaged in a stag hunt accompanied by beautiful women (Fig. 5). The finely-dressed young women ride behind the spirited hunters, and one of the females clings to the waist of her companion.

Such images beg the question, what are the significations of woman and the hunt that forbade her representation as vigorous huntress and instead encouraged amorous associations in which she is shown as tamed rather than as a tamer of nature? It is useful in such a discussion to turn to the writings of philosopher-social theorist, Simone de Beauvoir, and her discussions of age-old correlations between woman and nature to understand some of these implications.¹⁰ She discusses overarching ideologies that link woman more directly to nature itself. The female body, she asserts, is intimately associated with the reproductive process, while men, lacking natural creative functions, must assert their creativity externally and artificially through the medium of technology. In so doing, men create relatively lasting, transcendent objects, while the woman creates only perishables—human beings. For de Beauvoir, this explains why male activities involving the destruction of life (hunting and warfare) have more charisma than the female's ability to give birth.

Yet it is not the killing that is the relevant and valued aspect of hunting and warfare, rather it is the transcendental (or social, cultural) nature of these activities. She reasons, "For it is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above

Mary's Psalter. In a review of Almond's monograph, *Daughters of Artemis*, Robin S. Oggins argues against the literalness of the exceptional illustrations in these two medieval texts, and suggests that they might be satirical, as Sekules argues, or that they are more likely allegorical representations of men hunting women or women hunting men in a love hunt in *The Medieval Review*, 10.06.40.

⁹ Chantilly, Musée de Condé, *Très Riches Heures*, MS 65, fol. 8v. See also the contributions to this volume by Albrecht Classen and Lia B. Ross.

¹⁰ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. Howard M. Parshley (1949; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983).

the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills."¹¹ Anthropologist Sherry Ortner expands an analysis of these associations in her essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?"¹² She suggests that man as tamer of nature represents culture. Women, in this model, are not only related to nature via their ability to give birth, but because they lactate, they continue to be the caregivers and molders of children, and thus they are confined to domestic roles. Therefore it is men's role, or the role of culture, to control and to organize disorderly women and wild nature.

It becomes evident that such anthropological models have relevance even for medieval and Renaissance art when viewing works like the sixteenth-century Netherlandish tapestry fragment entitled *Charitas* or love (Fig. 6). The image emphasizes the fertility and bounty of nature via the abundant fruits and flowers in association with the fecundity of woman who stands in the midst of nature surrounded by her children. Men are depicted strolling through nature in the side images and taming nature in the hunting scene above. Thus, the connections between the male pursuit of animals, as signs of the bounty of nature, and the male pursuit of women, as signs of love and procreation, are made clear. And both women and animals are triumphed over by man for his benefit and the benefit of society.

Throughout the medieval and Renaissance eras one finds a plethora of hunting images and texts in which the amorous stalking of women is paramount.¹³ In the famous Codex Manesse of about 1300, a beautifully and lavishly illustrated manuscript containing the largest collection of Middle High German courtly love poetry, a man and woman are depicted in nature, as represented by the stylized floral pattern (Fig. 7).¹⁴ The young man's falcon has clearly been trained and tamed by his master, as is indicated by the image of the bird eating the lure used to bring

¹¹ De Beauvoir, *Second Sex* (see note 10), 64.

¹² Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" *Feminist Studies* 1.2 (1972): 5–31.

¹³ There is extensive literature dealing with the symbolic connections between love and hunting in medieval and Renaissance texts and art. See, for example: Cummins, *Hound and Hawk* (see note 1), 70; Michael Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love* (London: Laurence King, 1998); Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); Sekules, "Women and Art" (see note 8), 48–49; Almond, *Hunting* (see note 1), 37–38.

¹⁴ Heidelberg, University of Heidelberg Library, *Manesse Codex*, MS 848, fol. 249v. Rudolf Sillib, Friedrich Panzer, and Arthur Erich Georg Hoseloff, *Die Manessische Liederhandschrift: Faksimilie-Ausgabe* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1929); this manuscript is now completely digitalized: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848> (last accessed on Dec. 14, 2011). For the significance of the falcon in courtly love poetry, see now Nicola Zotz, "Auf dem Weg zum Quodlibet: Das Falkenlied des 'Königsteiner Liederbuchs,' neben anderen mittelalterlichen Falkenliedern," *"Ieglicher sang sein eigen ticht": Germanistische und musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge zum deutschen Lied im Mittelalter*, ed. Christoph März (†), Lorenz Welker, and eadem. *Elementa Musicae*, 4 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011), 149–61.

it back after the hunt. Moreover, the leash in the hunter's gloved hand and attached to the bird's legs is a further indicator that the falcon is now his captive servant. The falconer has also captured the love of the young woman over whose lap he has draped himself. Like the bird, she also satisfies the demands of the man whose suggestive position and amorous gaze overtly indicate his lustful desires. Obviously the hunter was a signifier of male power to tame both nature and woman for his use.

Over the next centuries, hunting imagery frequently took on amorous allusions. Particularly common are images of a hunter offering a bird to his object of affection, as in a late fifteenth-century manuscript page from the *Book of Hours* of Engelbert of Nassau (Fig. 8).¹⁵ In the previous illustrations the actual hunt had been enacted. Finally, in this scene an eager young man kneels while presenting a very large fowl to a standing, elegantly dressed young woman. In a southern Netherlandish tapestry of the early sixteenth century, another kneeling hunter makes an offering of a large heron to a richly dressed woman who sports a falcon on her gloved hand (Fig. 9). Thus, even when the woman is involved in the hunt, it is the male lover who brings in the kill. In Netherlandish and Germanic cultures such a gesture had particularly erotic significance as the word for bird was used in verb form as a euphemism for the sexual act.¹⁶ One is also reminded in these love-offering scenes of Boccaccio's tale of Federigo degli Alberighi in the *Decameron* (ca. 1350–1353). The young man in the tale is unsuccessful in courting his love; as a final effort, almost tragically, he offers his only possession, a falcon, for her to eat when she happens to visit him because her son, about to die, would regain his health only if he were granted that falcon. Happily, this enormous act of chivalry, considering the falcon's extraordinary value, causes her to reconsider, and the two are married.¹⁷

Another visual reference to hunting women and animals is found in a set of Netherlandish tapestry fragments depicting a unicorn hunt of about 1500 (Fig. 10). According to the bestiaries, the unicorn was the fiercest and wildest of all creatures. Legend dictated that the only way to capture this beast was to set a virgin out in the wilds of nature. The unicorn, sensing her purity, would come and lay its head in her lap, and afterwards the hunter could come and capture his prey. In this scene the unicorn has already been ensnared, as the hounds are now tearing

¹⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Hours of Engelbert of Nassau*, MS Douce 219–220, fol. 60. Master of Mary of Burgundy; see J. J. G. Alexander, *A Book of Hours for Engelbert of Nassau the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (London, Phaidon, 1970).

¹⁶ For an important discussion of this sexual metaphor in art, see Eddy de Jongh, "Erotica in Vogelperspectief: De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse Genrevoorstellingen," *Simiolus* 3.1 (1968–1969): 22–74.

¹⁷ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. Mark Musa and Peter E. Bondanella (New York: Norton, 1983), tale 9 of day 5. I thank Albrecht Classen for pointing out this important reference.

into the animal's flesh. In the background, the hunter emerges from the bushes with his weapons and horn to take his prize. It is obvious from the coy backward look of the maiden that she will also submit to the sport of the hunter.¹⁸

Numerous medieval and Renaissance images of groping hunters are further indicators of contemporary logic regarding man's lust for the hunt giving rise to his lust for a woman, or for being a subterfuge for his real amatory goal. In a print by the Master E. S. from about 1460, the hunter with his hawk aggressively moves in to overtake his female game (Fig. 11). Her floral headdress overtly associates her with the natural setting around her, thus once again signifying the act of man triumphing over nature.

In the mid-sixteenth-century hunting tapestries of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) that were created in Flemish workshops, there are several examples of flirting hunters and their female captives. Specifically, the May tapestry depicts a rural scene with numerous men pursuing game in the background (Fig. 12). In the right foreground, there is a particularly explicit example of a dismounted hunter eagerly abandoning the chase of animals for the pleasurable pursuit of a woman.

The Devonshire tapestries crafted in the Netherlands during the years 1400 to 1450 consistently reassert the traditional gendered logic of the hunt. While men are displayed rigorously pursuing, spearing, and hauling their prey in the stag and bear hunt tapestries, women stand and ride in decorous and graceful postures eschewing the actual violence of the sport. In a detail from the stag hunt, it is clear that the delicate sensibilities of the grimacing and cringing woman at the left are not up to the manly task of slitting the deer that she observes before her (Fig. 13). Not only do the men eagerly dig into this rigorous task, they also heartily launch into the available sexual sport, as evidenced in the fondling hunter to the right. Significantly, this energetic display takes place in the wild rural environment, which provides an appropriate metaphor for the men's passionate behavior. In nature, men are not restricted by the social constraints of the court or the town. Unquestionably, medieval and Renaissance depictions of the hunt contained a standardized logic of male and female roles in association with nature. Women and animals, as parallel aspects of nature that needed conquering, were available to the pursuit and carnal appetites of intrepid male sportsmen.

¹⁸ At times the unicorn could be used as a symbol for Christ, but in this rather seductive image, the unicorn certainly does not seem to carry religious connotations. For a discussion of the erotic connotations of the unicorn, see Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Hieronymus Bosch's Venetian St. Jerome," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 64.2 (1995): 71–85.

Early Modern Views of the Hunt and Rural Space

None of this typical hunting imagery of the medieval and Renaissance eras prepares us for the dramatic changes that occur in some seventeenth-century Dutch paintings of women at the hunt. In a painting by Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668), for example, a woman who is now singly mounted fills the central and most elevated portion of the painting (Fig. 14). She prepares to sound the hunter's horn as the hounds eagerly await her signal below. In the right foreground, women examine the kill laid out on the ground. Another Wouwerman painting portrays an even more surprisingly modern view of huntresses, who vigorously ride their full-galoping mounts alone (Fig. 15). They actually wield the snares used to entrap the fleeing animals, and they are surrounded by the frenzy of the dashing hounds. They are full participants in the action, rigor, and excitement of the chase in the wilds of nature.

Abraham Hondius particularly took delight in these vigorous views of women at the hunt. In one painting, the woman is clearly equal to the men in terms of her athletic skill in ensnaring the birds and galloping with the hounds (Fig. 16). Indeed, it is her hunting prowess that takes center stage in the painting. Even more surprising are Hondius's images of huntresses in pursuit of larger game like stags and boars. In one such scene, the woman even wields a manly spear while charging singly-mounted and with full force (Fig. 17). The woman's athletic ability once again becomes the central focus; she is equal to her male companion in bravery and skill. Her fearlessness is emphasized by the dangerous boar that she aggressively attacks. Her expression is one of calm and victorious assurance, knowing that she will triumph over her wild and ferocious prey. In another Hondius painting, the huntress and hunter poise their menacing spears in tandem as complete equals (Fig. 18). Neither of them evidences any fear in their forceful attack and they both fiercely display their keen sporting abilities.

The extremely elegant dress of the women in these scenes is a continuing reference to the fact that hunting was still viewed as a sport for the court and the aristocracy during this period. In studying the ceremony of the hunt in the Baroque era, Timothy Blanning has concluded that it was an event meant to display the power and to emphasize the dominion of the upper classes.¹⁹ Martin Knoll has expanded this thesis to suggest that the hunt was also a demonstration of dominating the physical space of the hunt. Therefore, the aristocracy was able to equate the domestication or taming of nature with general claims to authority over others.²⁰ Even in the predominantly middle-class culture of the Dutch

¹⁹ Timothy C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture. Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁰ Martin Knoll, "Hunting in the Eighteenth Century: An Environmental History Perspective,"

Republic, as Scott A. Sullivan has suggested, the hunting imagery of this society was still primarily associated with the court and nobility.²¹ Indeed, the few seventeenth-century Dutch texts on hunting make it clear that the activity was carefully restricted and limited to this social elite.²² The middle classes could attempt an elevation of their own status, however, by associating themselves with the hunt, as in Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern* (1639). Sullivan asserts that the popularity of fashionable Dutch hunting scenes beginning mid-century suggests a broad bourgeois market of individuals wanting to associate themselves with a higher stratum of society. I would suggest, more specifically, that the insertion of Amazon-like huntresses into these scenes was a means by which women of the middle classes could relate to the aggressive females as a signification of a new type of female power and authority.

Hendrick Verschuring (1627–1690), another mid-seventeenth-century Dutch artist, displayed this new female power within the hunting image in more ways than one. Like Hondius and others, he depicted fashionably-dressed women vigorously taking part in the rural hunting scene. In one such image, the woman is again centrally placed riding through the countryside amidst an active party of hunters and hounds (Fig. 19). But perhaps even more daring is another painting by Verschuring of a huntress resting with a hound (Fig. 20). Here one witnesses a shocking subversion of traditional gender boundaries in the woman's attire. She has abandoned the impractical, decorative, and feminine dresses of previous huntresses and has donned the trousers and boots of her male companions. This, more than any other signifier in these paintings, would have indicated the woman's usurpation of traditional male privileges and power. As will be discussed, trousers were a strictly male form of attire and a woman wearing them was viewed as a severe social taboo. It was a clear indication that the woman had inappropriately violated traditional gender boundaries.²³

In regards to this new image of the huntress in trousers, it is significant to note that Verschuring spent several years working in Italy. He joined a group of other

Historical Social Research 29.3 (2004): 9–36. See also the contributions to this volume by Marilyn L. Sandidge, Abigail P. Dowling, and Lia B. Ross.

²¹ Scott A. Sullivan, "Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern*," *The Art Bulletin* 62.2 (1980): 236–43.

²² Paullus G. F. P. N. Merula, *Placaten ende ordonnancien op 'tstuck vande Wildernissen* (The Hague, 1605). *Het Jachts-Bedrieff*, from the MS of 1636 in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, published in *Nederlandsche Jager*, 1898–1900, nos. 169–238.

²³ Laws against cross-dressing are discussed in Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989). For medieval conditions, see Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1991 (New York: Garland, 1996).

Netherlandish painters in Rome known as the *Bamboccianti*.²⁴ The artists of this group particularly used the warm and exotic Italian landscape as the setting for contemporary low-life figures in a continuation of traditional Netherlandish *topoi*. The hunting scene was one of the Netherlandish artistic traditions that they now situated in these arcadian landscapes. Perhaps it seemed appropriate to these artists that the fanciful nature of a woman in trousers should be situated in this fantastical setting. Indeed, several artists within this group painted images of huntresses in trousers. Johannes Lingelbach (1622–1674), for example, was another member of this group who depicted women both at the hunt riding singly mounted and sporting hawks or resting from the hunt in men's trousers. Pieter van Laer (1599–ca. 1642) and Willem Reuter (ca. 1642–1681), other Netherlandish artists working in Rome, also depicted huntresses in trousers. In one of Reuter's paintings in the Castello Sforzesco, the hunt has already taken place in the scene, as is indicated by the dead game situated near the hounds at the right side of the painting. The central focus in the painting is the standing huntress in trousers. She is also the most emphasized figure in that she actively communicates with the townsfolk.

The artist who seems to have most often used the theme of the manly huntress, was Jan Miel (1599–1663). This artist from the Southern Netherlands also worked in Italy with the *Bamboccianti*. His rather unique portrait of the princess of Savoy, Henriette Adelaide (1636–1676), with her husband, Ferdinand, Elector of Bavaria (1636–1679), displays the couple at the hunt. Henriette is shown singly mounted at a full gallop with spear in hand similar to Hondius's hunting scenes. The hounds eagerly precede the couple, as servants actively participate on foot. The princess's billowing and brightly lit costume and her gaze toward the viewer boldly mark her as the dramatic central focus of the painting.

Miel's numerous paintings of trousers-wearing huntresses, however, are even more revolutionary in their crossing of gender boundaries. He painted several scenes of cross-dressed huntresses resting from the hunt. These manly women are almost always the focal point of the painting. In one such painting, the dismounted huntress feeds her hounds while taking refreshment from a servant in the background (Fig. 21). Her central, vertical position and highlighted figure emphasize her manly significance, and her striding legs clearly draw attention to the fact that she is wearing trousers. Her male companions are greatly deemphasized: one is seated in the shadow on the ground with the animals, while the other is situated in the background and viewed mostly from behind.

²⁴ Marijke de Kinkelder appears to have been the first scholar to note this phenomenon of huntresses in trousers in "Vrouwen in mannenkleden: verslag van een onderzoek naar een ongebruikelijk verschijnsel in Rome in het tweede en derde kwart van de zeventiende eeuw," *RKD Bulletin*, special issue (2007): 21–25.

Obviously, the gender-crossing huntress is the primary subject of these unusual paintings.

Such a focus is made plainly evident in another Miel painting in which there are only two figures depicted (Fig. 22). One is a centrally-placed and highlighted woman who stands in a manly hand-on-hip pose with her other arm slung over the neck of her horse. The masculinity of her cross-legged pose exaggerates the surprising cross-dressing of this huntress in trousers and boots. She stands in a dominant position over her subservient male companion, who is eating on the ground amidst the hounds. Like the vigorous sportswomen depicted in Hondius's paintings, Miels's women transgress female boundaries in a reversal of traditional gendered authority that suggests a marked change in cultural attitudes regarding women, the hunt, and rural space.

Defining the Modern Woman

Surely, the pressing questions that occur upon viewing these seventeenth-century images of women at the hunt are: What socio-cultural changes took place during these years that allowed for such a redefining of women in association with the hunt and the rural environment? What allowed a vision of woman as manly conqueror of nature and creator of culture rather than as subjected sexual prey? An analysis of changing female roles during these years is enlightening in this regard. To begin with, a number of famous women rulers and heroines in the Netherlands influenced the cultural imaginary toward a greater acceptance of female power in traditionally male roles. Indeed, a number of rulers and regents over this area, beginning in the fifteenth century and continuing on into the sixteenth century were female. This tradition of powerful and manly females became both more pronounced and more common through the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries during the years of the Dutch Revolt.

One of the earlier examples of a powerful female ruler in the Netherlands was Jacoba van Beieren (1401–1436), last countess of Hainaut, Holland, and Zeeland. As the only child of William II, Duke of Bavaria, and Margaret of Burgundy, Jacoba inherited the position of sovereign of Holland and Hainaut at her father's death in 1417. The legend of this famous heroine who was an expert huntress and horsewoman was kept alive through images and texts into modern times. Male relatives tried to overtake her lands throughout her life, and she attained the reputation of a tenacious and fierce military leader as she successfully staved off her enemies for a time. One of the more telling episodes regarding her courageous and manly character was her escape from Ghent where Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy was plotting to send her away to a place of permanent imprisonment. She escaped by dressing in men's clothing; outside the city gates she met two of

her knights who helped her flee on horseback. Despite her relentless struggle, she was gradually forced to yield her lands and titles to the Duke of Burgundy.²⁵

At the end of the fifteenth century, Margaret of York married Charles the Bold, son of Philip the Good, and she became a very active participant in the governing of her husband's territories. When Charles died in 1477, the politically astute Margaret worked quickly to secure the Burgundian territories for her step-daughter Mary. She helped to arrange a marriage between Mary and the Archduke Maximilian of Austria. The couple then co-ruled the Burgundian territories until Mary's death in 1482. Mary was a great rider, and she died when her horse tripped while she was hunting with her husband. She was pregnant with a third child at the time. The guardianship of the two surviving children, Philip and Margaret, was contested, but eventually Margaret regained control over her step-grandson, and she set up court in Mechelen, which became the ducal headquarters until Philip came of age. Eventually, in 1493, she would also regain guardianship of her step-granddaughter, Margaret of Austria. During this period Margaret of York acted as close confidant and aide to Maximilian in his successful attempts to regain control of the rebellious Flemish states.

Although Philip, known as the Handsome, became sovereign of the Netherlands in 1494, his reign quickly came to an end with his sudden death in 1506. Therefore, Maximilian had to turn to his daughter, Margaret of Austria, as a substitute ruler for the Burgundian territories. In 1507 she was made governor of the Habsburg Netherlands after two rather short-lived marriages. She served as intermediary between the imperial subjects of the Netherlands and two emperors—her father and her nephew Charles V—for over twenty years. During her reign as regent, she proved herself to be one of the most accomplished rulers of the sixteenth century. The role of regent was a powerful position in the Netherlands. It meant that Margaret had the authority to negotiate treaties and trade relations; she also had the freedom to act in international affairs. Thus, Margaret successfully engineered a variety of treaties and alliances for the peace and economic well-being of her subjects. One contemporary stated that she had a man's talent for business and that she was even more capable than most men.²⁶ Margaret also had the guardianship of her dead brother's four children. When her nephew Charles came of age in 1515, Margaret's detractors persuaded him to remove her from office, but after a short time, he reinstated her as regent in which position she remained until her death in 1530. One of Margaret's most significant contributions during her

²⁵ For a very thorough discussion of the life of Jacoba van Beieren, see Antheun Janse, *Een Pion Voor Een Dame: Jacoba van Beieren, 1401–1436*. *Sluutelfiguren-reeks*, 1 (Amsterdam: Balans, 2009).

²⁶ Sharon L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 90. See also David Wallache, *Strong Women: Life, Text, and Territory 1347–1645* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

long reign was her role in negotiating the Ladies' Peace of 1529 between Charles and Francis I. This important treaty brought an end to the many years of struggle between France and the empire. Margaret was also a great patroness of the arts and was herself both a musician and poetess.²⁷

After Margaret's death, Charles appointed his sister, Mary of Hungary (or Mary of Austria), as governor of the Netherlands. Previously, Mary had shown herself to be an influential and astute sovereign in her marriage to the weak king, Louis of Hungary and Bohemia. Indeed, her political negotiations caused one contemporary to write, "If she could only be changed into a king, our affairs would be in better shape."²⁸ After the death of her husband, and during her reign as regent, Mary negotiated her way through a number of difficult situations including constant disputes between Charles and his enemies. Like her aunt, she was an intelligent politician, and she was even more determined in her opinions. In spite of the fact that she found ruling as a woman difficult and complained when Charles overruled her choices, she demonstrated great skill during her reign from 1531 to 1555. She successfully suppressed urban rebellions and other aggressions toward the Habsburgs. Mary was also a patron of music and an enthusiastic collector of important Netherlandish works of art. And like her grandmother, she was a great enthusiast of hunting. Only after several pleas to her brother, did Charles V allow his sister to retire finally from the regency when he also retired from power, yet he continued to try and persuade her to resume the office until both their deaths in 1558.

Philip II became sovereign of the Netherlands after the retirement of his father Charles V, and in 1559, he appointed Margaret of Parma, Charles's illegitimate daughter, as regent. There was some local support for Margaret, who was considered a Netherlandish native, and thus she was able to negotiate more effectively with her subjects. Like her female predecessors, she was considered manly by her contemporaries. Even her appearance and gait were considered masculine. Her regency coincided with some of the most dramatic political and religious strife of the sixteenth century. The expanding prosperity of the middle class and the spread of Protestant ideas in cities like Antwerp would eventually

²⁷ Significant sources on the lives of sixteenth-century female rulers of the Netherlands include: Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment* (see note 26); Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments: the Netherlands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Monika Triest, *Macht, Vrouwen en Politiek: 1477–1558: Maria van Bourgondië, Margareta van Oostenrijk, Maria van Hongarije* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 2000). Mary composed one remarkable poem of lament on the death of her husband, the King of Hungary, Louis II. See Albrecht Classen, 'Mein seelfang an zu singen': Religiöse Frauenlieder der[sic: des] 15.–16. Jahrhunderts. *Studies in Spirituality*, 6 (Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, VA: Peeters, 2002), 270–72.

²⁸ Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment* (see note 26), 98.

lead to rebellion and riots in 1566 against the perceived tyranny of the king and the Catholic church.

Margaret was tremendously successful in reestablishing both royal and Catholic authority. In spite of her assurances to Philip that the situation in the Netherlands was now calm and that he should not send an army, the king did not heed her advice. In consequence of this military imposition, the Netherlands initiated another revolt that resulted in the eventual separation and liberation of the Northern provinces in the forming of the Dutch Republic. After this disastrous military campaign, Margaret was reinstated as governor in 1578 and she remained in the office until her retirement in 1582.

Clearly this succession of powerful female rulers, who had usurped traditional male privileges and authority by acting as men, set the stage for a society that would be more familiar with, and accepting of, such gender transgression. The Netherlands had been ruled by females throughout most of the sixteenth century! These women rulers had taken on a number of male roles. They had been astute politicians and military leaders. They were creators of culture via their "matronage." And finally, in very specific regards to this essay, they rode horses, they hunted, and they took on the appearance of men. Indeed, this powerful female heritage significantly inspired a new generation of powerful women as the Netherlands struck out in rebellion against Philip II. Perhaps it is not surprising, considering the gender heritage of the Netherlands, that a number of national heroines emerged from this Dutch revolt for independence (1568–1648). The most important of these women was Kenau Simons Hasselaer from Haarlem (1526–1588). For centuries, her heroic deeds were patriotically celebrated in word and image. Her constantly expanding legend assigned her the rank of captain as she led 300 women to battle.

Another famous heroine, Trijn van Leemputts (1530–1607), was from the city of Utrecht, and purportedly she led the women folk in an army to destroy the Spanish fortress. These women and many others were eulogized in various prints, paintings, poems, and histories throughout the early modern era. Their bravery was considered as equal to, or even greater than, a man's, and they were pictured in violent and aggressive poses as they courageously triumphed over the enemy. In an engraving attributed to Romeyn de Hooghe of 1688, for example, Kenau actively leads the charge of a female legion. The women are armed and wearing military sashes like the men in the background (Fig. 23). In a more violent image by Remigius Hogenberg (ca. 1536–ca. 1588), Kenau brandishes the severed head of the Spanish officer Don Rodrigo Perez (Fig. 24). She stands in a masculine pose holding a pike that was typically used for depicting heroes of the era. As is clearly represented in this image, Kenau was associated with ancient heroines of the past

like Judith who beheaded Holofernes. Moreover, the several heroines of the revolt were called Amazons by their contemporaries.²⁹

In directly linking the many seventeenth-century images of these military women to the huntresses discussed earlier, it should be understood that there existed previously a strong traditional connection between the soldier and the hunter. In discussing Peter Paul Rubens's (1577–1640) paintings of lion and tiger hunts, Suzanne Walker references contemporary texts that advocate the hunt as a way of preparing the soldier to face the violence and terror of battle. She suggests that the composed demeanors of the soldier-hunters in these images of frenzied action convey their success in having triumphed over these emotions.³⁰ Similarly, the aggressive Dutch heroines and huntresses of the seventeenth century are depicted with restrained emotion as they display no revulsion or fear in the midst of such bloodshed. Instead, they bravely and calmly triumph over their wild and violent prey

It is important to note that the Dutch heroine tradition continued in actuality throughout the seventeenth century, as the heroines of the revolt inspired future generations of women who also wanted to take on traditional male soldiering roles to protect the Fatherland. These later heroines, however, took this daring to a new level by actually dressing as men and disguising themselves as soldiers. Such anecdotes relate directly to the research of Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol. Their investigations yielded a significant number of cases in which women cross-dressed and enlisted as sailors and soldiers during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the Netherlands. These numerous instances throughout the early modern era of Dutch women actually wearing male attire and engaging in the violence of battle must have affected cultural opinions regarding women's abilities to do battle aggressively and violently in a manly fashion. Indeed, the actions of these women and the resulting fame they accrued inspired a number of public debates regarding the nature of women and their roles.³¹

Further evidence of the publicly recognized ferocious power of women in this society is seen in an illustration from J. L. Gottfried's *Historische Chronyck*, 1660, in which the women are shown as the hunters and subjugators of men (Fig. 25). Here, aggressive female action is depicted rather terrifyingly in an illustration of a Delft

²⁹ For a thorough discussion of images of heroines of the Dutch Revolt, see, Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire: The Dutch Heroine Tradition," *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 7 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 557–98.

³⁰ Suzanne Walker, "Composing the Passions in Rubens' Hunting Scenes," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 60 (2010): 109–23.

³¹ Dekker and van de Pol, *Female Transvestism* (see note 23); Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire" (see note 29).

riot. Powerful and violent women abound, and household weapons are militantly wielded against the civic official in the foreground. Indeed, this riot of 1616 was labeled “the women’s revolt of Delft.” Interestingly, Rudolf Dekker has uncovered the existence of many female-led and instigated riots in the Dutch Republic.³²

Male anxiety regarding these very public subversions of traditional male roles and hegemony can be witnessed in the many satirical prints of the era where women usurp male privilege and authority.³³ In a late sixteenth-century print by Claes Braeu after Karel van Mander, the “battle for the trousers,” or the battle for power in marriage, becomes a rather violent struggle, as neither the husband nor the wife has yet won the prized trousers (Fig. 26). They have both pulled up one leg of the trousers and are in the process of struggling in order to completely master the pants. The wife grabs the husband’s hair, and he responds with an anguished expression of pain, as he attempts to restrain her. As previously mentioned, the trousers had long been considered a strictly male form of clothing and thus became a symbol of men generally, just as the skirt represented the female. The expression “*De broek aanhebben*” [to have the trousers on] or “*De broek dragen*” [to wear the pants] referred to a person’s being master in the house.³⁴ A woman who wore trousers not only signaled that she had taken on male attributes, but also that she had seized the powers and privileges of her husband. The inscription below describes the inevitability of feared female power:

Es ist gros creutz im haus,
 All wolfort weicht auch draus;
 Wans weib den man ansicht,
 Ihr bein in die hosen sticht.
 Quant la femme a le Braye chaussee
 La maison est entierement troublee.
 Tis groot cruijs int huis,
 al waer froechn in den hoec sneefft;
 Daer twijff vol gekijff
 een been dus in die broock hefft.

[It is a great cross in the house,
 All prosperity also vanishes from it,

³² Rudolf M. Dekker, “Women in Revolt: Popular Protest and its Social Basis in Holland in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Theory and Society* 16.3 (May 1987): 337–61.

³³ For a discussion of this tradition in Netherlandish art, see Martha Moffitt Peacock, “The Comedy of the Shrew: Theorizing Humor in Early Modern Netherlandish Art,” *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 667–713.

³⁴ Frederik A. Stoett, *Nederlandsche spreekwoorden, spreekwijzen, uitdrukkingen en gezegden*, vol. 1 (Zutphen: W. J. Thieme, 1923), 140–41.

when the wife challenges the husband's authority
 and puts her leg in the pants.
 When the wife wears the pants,
 the house is entirely disturbed.
 It is a great cross in the house,
 where virtue falls in the corner;
 there the wife full of arguing, as shown above,
 has a leg in the pants.]

In a late sixteenth-century print by Bosscher there are several metaphors for contumacious and powerful females (Fig. 27). At the right of the print, a seated woman forces a kneeling man to dress her in his trousers. In the left background a man is beaten and forced to use a female tool, the winder. In the left foreground a submissive man kneels to kiss the woman's thumb, which was also a sign of male subservience.³⁵ Flying above this topsy-turvy scene is a banner bearing the words "*D'overhant*" or [the upper hand], stressing that it is now the women who have the power. The other inscriptions give further commentary on the subversive power of women:

Aut amat, aut odit Mulier, nil tertium
 habere Dicitur: insanum ni foret Imperium.
 Unde superba suum cogit sufflare maritum:
 Et bracata, tenet bellica signa, MANUM.
 Waer de Vrouw d'overhandt heeft, en draecht de brouck
 Daer ist dat Jan de man leeft naer aduys van den douck
 Ou la femme gouuerne, portant la banniere
 Et des brayes avecq: le tout y va derriere.

[A woman either loves or hates;
 she is said to have no third alternative,
 Unless it is a crazed lust for domination
 which causes her in her pride
 to force her husband to knuckle under.
 While she, wearing the pants,
 holds up the battle standard, the HAND.
 Where the woman has the upper hand,
 and wears the trousers,
 There it is that Jan the Man lives
 according to the dictates of the skirt.
 Where the woman governs, carrying the banner
 And the trousers too, everyone follows behind.]

³⁵ Walter Gibson, "Some Flemish Popular Prints from Hieronymus Cock and His Contemporaries," *Art Bulletin* 60.4 (Dec. 1978): 673–81.

Clearly, the increasing power of women asserted by both female rulers during the sixteenth century and by heroines of the revolt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries caused a perception by some males that this development went against the bounds of what nature and God had intended for the female sex. In particular, the powerful images of the modern Dutch heroine must have created anxiety in many males who saw these manly images as a threat to traditional notions of natural gender roles. As a result, numerous images ridiculing this societal condition appeared during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The subject of the violent, aggressive, and trouser-usurping wife took on several humorous forms. But while these images may have been, for men, an attempt to relieve, through comedy, their anxiety and to act as a curative in a society where women had actually and significantly crossed gender boundaries, the images may have held a very different meaning for women. As I have argued elsewhere, the woman viewer likely took delight in the female-power-engendering aspects of both glorifying heroine imagery and scenes of the aggressive housewife who seizes authority and takes on male roles.³⁶ Such images would have encouraged women to self-define and self-fashion in new and commanding ways. In this light, images of the modern huntress vigorously controlling her galloping horse while expertly wielding her masculine weaponry or wearing male apparel takes on a myriad of significant power-enhancing associations for female viewers.

The New Gendered Logic of Rural Space

Hence, we are now able to provide answers to questions raised by the dramatically changed perceptions of women at the hunt, namely: What socio-cultural changes took place during these years that allowed for such a redefining of women in association with the hunt and the rural environment? What allowed a vision of woman as manly conqueror of nature and creator of culture rather than as subjected sexual prey? The threatening weaponry, the aggressive postures, the violent action, the triumphant power, the equality with men, and even the cross-dressing found in seventeenth-century Netherlandish hunting images can be explained by actual changes in cultural perceptions of women's abilities, women's character, and women's roles. For generations, the defining of women's roles had been constantly adjusted via powerful female rulers and heroines that transgressed the normal boundaries of their sex. These disruptions of traditional socio-cultural signifiers assigned to Netherlandish women a more aggressive and manly nature.

³⁶ Peacock, "Comedy of the Shrew" (see note 33).

Thus, we return to our original purpose of discovering the gendered logic of rural space as it relates to the Netherlandish visual tradition of hunting scenes. Earlier connotations of nature as an arena for unfettered and wild activity continued from the past to modern seventeenth-century hunting scenes. Nature persisted as a space in which one's fervor and energy could be given free reign, loosed from normal societal constraints. The associations of women with this space, however, did change in the wake of the Dutch revolt. As women increasingly took on aggressive non-traditional female roles in society generally, the images of women hunting also contested conventional norms.

Rural space, that already possessed imbedded notions of subverting propriety, was now the "natural" setting for images of women transgressing traditional gender constrictions. The freedom of nature could now also call to the aggressive and impassioned nature of women. Significantly, this redefining of women's character and abilities only lasted through the century, as eighteenth-century images of huntresses returned to a more elegant, refined, and amorous nature. In the few instances where women are actually shown riding at the hunt in these later images, rather than seductively entertaining hunters at rest, they are no longer engaged in the violent struggle with beasts and nature. Nevertheless, for a brief historical moment during the seventeenth century, the modern woman had been able to compete with her male counterpart in terms of bravery and skill in taming the wildness of nature. During this era, the seemingly innate characteristics of rural space and the hunt had not changed essentially from the medieval past, but attitudes regarding women's ability to participate in the freedom and energy inspired by nature and the hunt had been dramatically altered during the fight for political independence and the emergence of the newly liberated woman of the Dutch Republic.



Fig. 1: *Wolf Hunt*, *Livre de la chasse*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris



Fig. 2: *Boar Hunt*, *Livre de la chasse*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

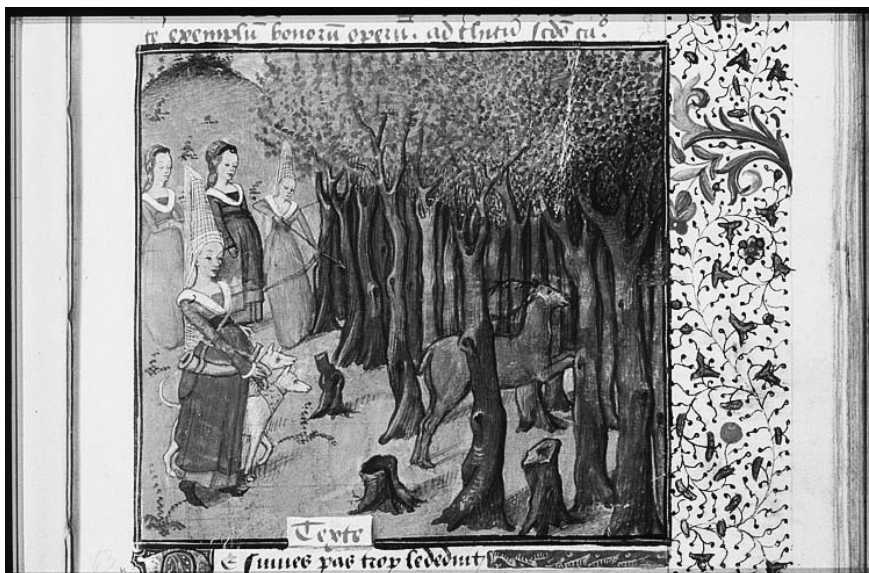


Fig. 3: *Diana at the Hunt*, Christine de Pizan's *Epistola de Othea*, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague

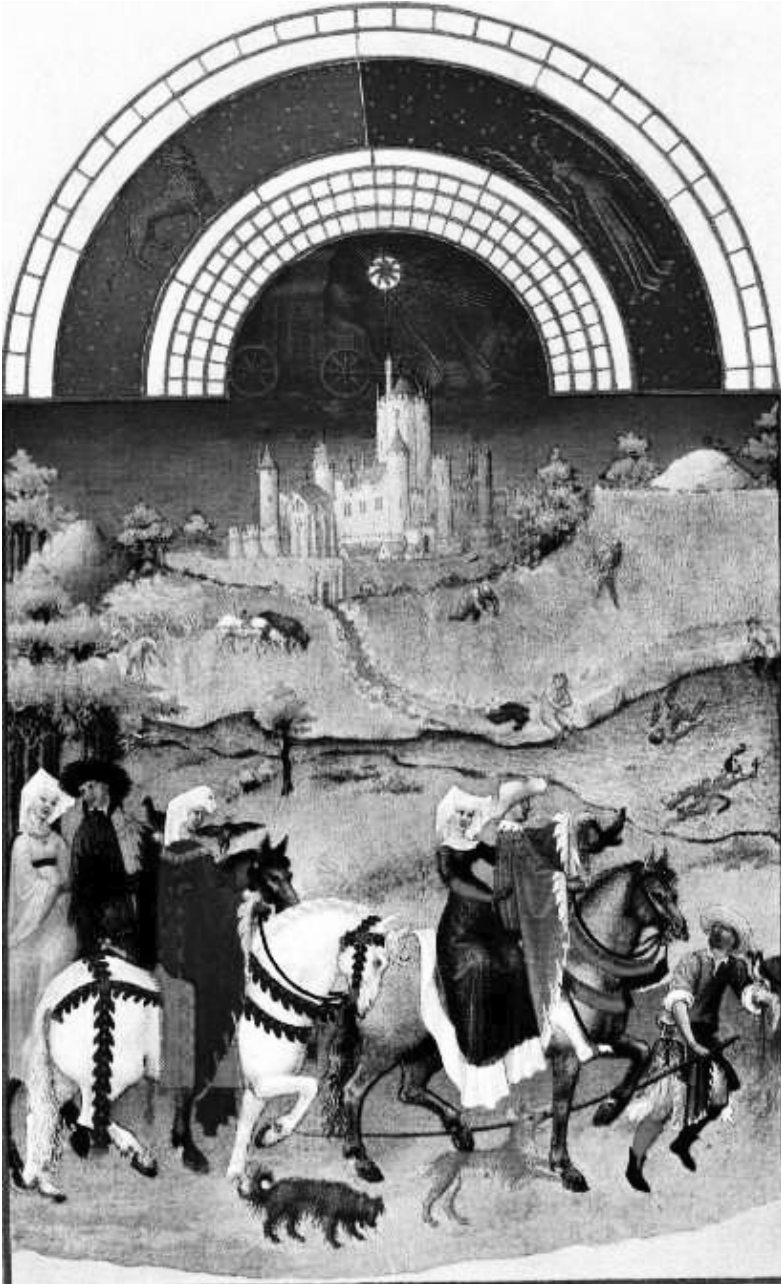


Fig. 4: Limbourg Brothers, *August*, *Très Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry, Musée de Condé, Chantilly

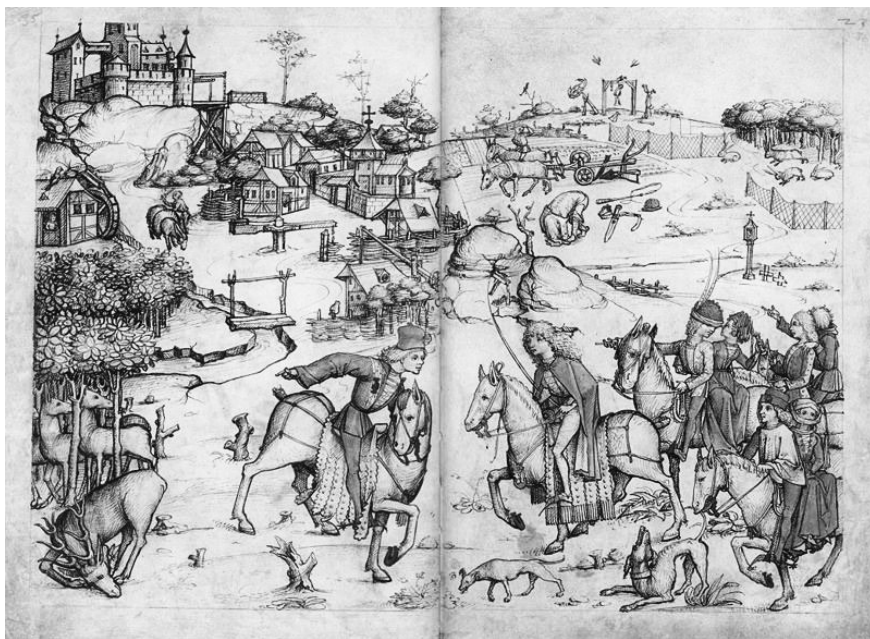


Fig. 5: Housebook Master, *Stag Hunt*, "Medieval Housebook," Waldburg-Wolfegg Collection, Munich



Fig. 6: *Charitas*, Private Collection



Fig. 7: *Pair of Lovers*, *Manesse Codex*, University of Heidelberg Library, Heidelberg



Fig. 8: *Hunter Presenting a Fowl to a Lady*, *Hours of Engelbert of Nassau*, Bodleian Library, Oxford



Fig. 9: *Hunter Presenting a Fowl to a Lady*, Metropolitan Museum, New York



Fig. 10: *Unicorn Hunt*, Metropolitan Museum, New York



Fig. 11: Master E.S., *Pair of Lovers*, Vienna, Albertina



Fig. 12: Bernard van Orley, *May* (detail), *The Hunts of Maximilian*,
The Louvre, Paris



Fig. 13: *Stag Hunt* (detail), *Devonshire Hunting Tapestries*,
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Fig. 14: Philips Wouwerman, *The Hunt* (detail), Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Salzburg



Fig. 15: Philips Wouwerman, *Hunting the Stag*, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Glasgow



Fig. 16: Abraham Hondius, *Bird Hunt*, 1666, Present Location Unknown



Fig. 17: Abraham Hondius, *The Hunt*, Present Location Unknown



Fig. 18: Abraham Hondius, *The Hunt*, Private Collection, Hamburg



Fig. 19: Hendrick Verschuring, *A Hunting Party in a Dune Landscape*, Christies



Fig. 20: Hendrick Verschuring, *Resting from the Hunt* (detail),
Private Collection, Germany

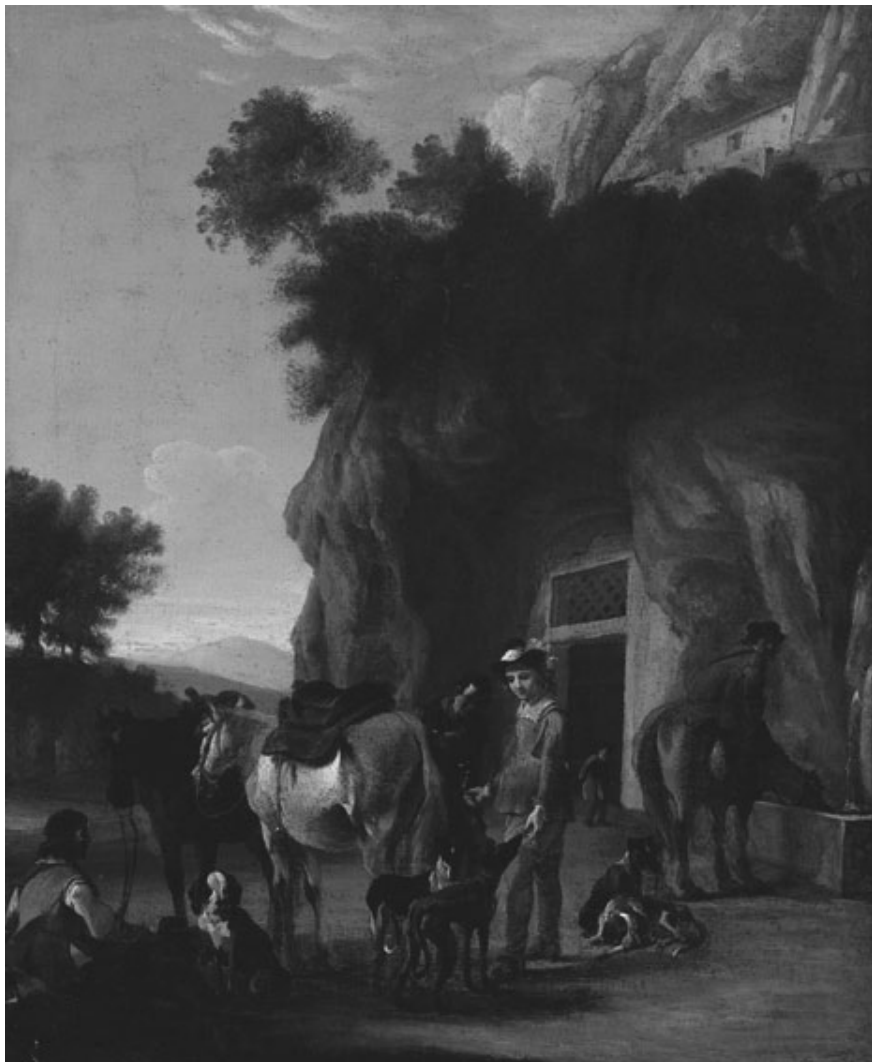


Fig. 21: Jan Miel, *Resting from the Hunt*, Present Location



Fig. 22: Jan Miel, *Resting at the Hunt*, Present Location Unknown



Fig. 23: Romeyn de Hooghe, *Kenau Simons Hasselaer*, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 24: Remigius Hogenberg, Kenau Simons Hasselaer, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 25: Jacob van Meurs, *Women's Revolt in Delft, 1616*, Belasting and Douane Museum, Rotterdam



Fig. 26: Claes Braeu after Karel van Mander, *Battle for the Trousers*,
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 27: Joos de Bosscher, *The Upper Hand*, Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam

Chapter 27

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“The free Enjoyment of the Earth”: Gerrard Winstanley on Land Reform

Saint George’s Hill, rising about thirty-five meters above the road from Weybridge to Cobham in the county of Surrey, became ground zero for a final but failed phase of the English Revolution (see Fig. 1). On Sunday, April 4, 1649, a dozen men and women walked north from Cobham, carrying seeds and farming tools. When they reached the hill, they cleared a patch of land and planted peas, carrots, and parsnips; they later added “corn,” or grain. If anyone asked the self-styled Diggers why they were digging up the land, they would have gladly explained their action. The land was a heath or commons, and they represented the common people, also known as the commons.¹ Moreover it was regarded as crown-land, where the King’s hunting parties had priority. However, after the execution of King Charles I nine weeks earlier, on January 30, England ceased to be monarchy and became a commonwealth.² A few weeks later, on March 19, Parliament abolished the House of Lords as being “useless and dangerous to the people of England,”³ making the House of Commons the sole temporal authority in England. Parliament had also disestablished the Church of England. It followed on linguistic, political, and religious principles “That the Common people ought to dig, plow, plant and dwell upon the Commons” (see Fig. 2).⁴

¹ See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), “commons” noun1a and 3a; hereafter *OED*.

² See *OED*, “crown-land,” noun 1, and “commonwealth,” noun 4a.

³ See <http://www.constitution.org/eng/conpur089.htm> (last accessed on July 26, 2011).

⁴ Gerrard Winstanley *A Letter to the Lord Fairfax, and His Councill of War* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), A1r.

Behind the choice of locale was a definite symbolism. Although the Diggers, as radical Protestants, refused to name the saints of the old church and simply spoke of George Hill, the hill was named after the patron saint of England. Saint George was said to have freed the country from the tyranny of a dragon or, in the Yuletide mummers' play, from the tyranny of a Saracen.⁵ Near the hilltop were the remains of an ancient fortress, where the Diggers' ancestors might have resisted the invasion of Norman soldiers nearly six hundred years earlier. From the summit locals said they could see Saint George's Chapel on Castle Hill in Windsor, some twenty miles away over modern roads, and esotericists who study ley lines maintain that both sites are on the Saint George's Line.⁶ Meanwhile, the choice of date could not have been accidental. April 4 was Easter Sunday, and the Diggers expected their actions would prepare for the Second Coming of Christ, who would slay the great dragon of the Apocalypse⁷ and prepare for the Millennium.

The crops planted that day did not mature. They were dug up and the Diggers' makeshift settlement was burned by ruffians the local landlords hired. Eventually, the Diggers were evicted by court action. Throughout the upheaval, the voice for these "true levellers" was that of a passionate Englishman named Gerrard Winstanley. What remained for these "First Losers" of the English Revolution was above all his writings.⁸ In this essay, I will first review Winstanley's reputation, then the main events of his life, and finally the writings themselves. In doing so, I hope to show the continuity between his religious and political ideas.

1. Winstanley's Posthumous Reputation

During the last century, Winstanley has gone from nearly total obscurity to something like canonical status in the history and literature of seventeenth-century England. The first sustained study of his work appeared in 1906.⁹ Prior to this,

⁵ See J. Stevens-Cox, ed., *Mumming and the Mummers' Play of St. George: The Versions Including that of Thomas Hardy*, Monographs on the Life, Times, and Works of Thomas Hardy, 67 (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1970).

⁶ London Psychographical Association, "The Great Conjunction: The Symbols of a College, the Death of a King and the Maze on a Hill," *Scribendi.com*, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/42371986/The-Great-Conjunction-A-report-by-the-Archaeogeodetic-Association-and-the-London-Psychogeographical-Association> (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011).

⁷ Revelation 12: 9; King James Version. All biblical references are to this translation.

⁸ On these "First Losers," see Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (1984; London: Penguin, 1985), 29–50; esp. 37–42.

⁹ Henry Lewis Berens, *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth, as Revealed in the Writings of Gerrard Winstanley, the Digger, Mystic, and Rationalist, Communist and Social Reformer* (London: Simkin Marshall, 1906).

there had been only the occasional passing reference.¹⁰ A century later, his writing would be excerpted in the venerable *Norton Anthology of English Literature*,¹¹ and his “complete works” would be published for the first time in a heavily annotated edition prepared by a historian of England and two Miltonists.¹²

In 1906, Henry Lewis Berens regarded Winstanley as a source for the “most characteristic tenets and doctrines” of the early Quakers and for the “fundamental principles” set forth by the American politician Henry George, who proposed a single tax on land.¹³ He painted a two-sided picture of Winstanley. On the one side was the “mystic and rationalist,” on the other the “communist and social reformer.” The next picture was more one-sided, as it was first written for a multi-volume history of Socialism. Eduard Bernstein was, like Karl Kautsky, a convinced Marxist, and he approached Winstanley very much as Friedrich Engels had approached Thomas Müntzer, who led the German peasants in revolt more than a century earlier.¹⁴ Engels maintained that the peasants’ war in Germany was not a religious war with a social dimension but, quite the opposite, a class war whose issues were set forth in religious language:

... in den sogenannten Religionskriegen des sechzenten Jahrhunderts handelte es sich vor allem um sehr positive materielle Klasseninteressen, und diese Kriege waren Klassenkämpfe, ebenso gut wie die späteren inneren Kollisionen in England und Frankreich.¹⁵

¹⁰ See, e.g., Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649–1656*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, 1903), 1: 42–44 and 2: 78–79.

¹¹ *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8th ed., ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 2006), 1: 1751–57.

¹² *The Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*, ed. Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes, and David Lowenstein, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); hereafter CWGW. On this edition’s significance, see the review by Christopher Rowland in *Journal of Theological History* 61.2 (Oct. 2010): 848–51. Because most of Winstanley’s texts are available in the Early English Books Online database, I cite the page numbers (or signatures) in the original printings as well as in the new standard edition.

¹³ Berens, *Digger Movement* (see note 9), 45; Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879; New York: Vanguard, 1929).

¹⁴ Ed[uard] Bernstein, *Sozialismus und Demokratie in der großen englischen Revolution*, 2nd ed., Internationale Bibliothek, 44 (Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz, 1908), esp. 155–76 (“Die kommunistische Utopie des Gerrard Winstanley”). Bernstein includes a chapter on the Diggers and earlier English Levellers (102–31). The book was first published as part of a multi-volume history of Socialism: Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, ed., *Die Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellung*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz, 1895–1898); vol. 2 (1895). Bernstein and Kautsky later broke with each other over the application of Marxist doctrine to contemporary conditions, and Bernstein’s revised (*durchgesehene*) edition reflects his views as a “revisionist” Marxist. For Kautsky’s take on the same period, see note 19.

¹⁵ Friedrich Engels, *Der Staat als Wirklichkeit*, Part 2: *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg* (1850; Zürich: Pegasus, 1945), 39.

[In the so-called religious wars of the Sixteenth Century, very positive material class-interests were at play, and those wars were class wars just as were the later collisions in England and France.¹⁶]

For Engels, Müntzer was primarily a political figure:

Münzer . . . trennte sich jetzt entschieden von der bürgerlichen Reformation und trat von nun an zugleich direct als politischer Agitator auf.

Seine theologisch-philosophische Doktrin griff alle Hauptpunkte nicht nur des Katholizismus, sondern des Christentums überhaupt an. Er lehrte unter christlichen Formen einen Pantheismus, der mit der modernen spekulativen Anschauungsweise eine merkwürdige Ähnlichkeit hat und stellenweise sogar an Atheismus anstreift.¹⁷

[Muenzer . . . relinquished the middle-class reformation, and at the same time appeared as a direct political agitator.

His theologic-philosophic doctrine attacked all the main points not only of Catholicism but of Christianity as such. Under the cloak of Christian forms, he preached a kind of pantheism, which curiously resembles the modern speculative mode of contemplation, and at times even taught open atheism.¹⁸]

The statement applies fairly well to Müntzer, a former Catholic priest and Lutheran pastor whose hatred of clergy extended to nobles and led to a message of violent revolt.¹⁹ Winstanley, by contrast, remained a pacifist. He did not urge action against landowners, simply justice for peasants. Nevertheless, the tactic taken with Müntzer was applied to Winstanley in Bernstein's book and in many of those which followed its eventual translation, in 1930.²⁰ For a whole generation of historians, writing in the 1930s and after, Winstanley was a British Socialist *avant la lettre*.²¹ The first modern edition of his works omitted those with little "communist" appeal.²² The most distinguished historian, the late Christopher Hill,

¹⁶ Friedrich Engels, *The German Revolutions: The Peasant War in Germany and Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, trans. Leonard Krieger (1850; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 34.

¹⁷ Engels, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg* (see note 15), 55.

¹⁸ Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (see note 16), 45–46.

¹⁹ See the introductory material in Michael Baylor, ed. and trans., *Revelation and Revolution: Basic Writings of Thomas Müntzer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a better analogue to the Diggers, see the treatment of the German Taborites in Karl Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, trans. J. L. and E. G. Mulliken (London: Fisher Unwin, 1897), 29–77; first published in 1895 as vol. 2 in *Die Geschichte des Sozialismus* (see note 14), a series Kautsky later continued as *Vorläufer des neueren Sozialismus*. For a discussion of the German Peasants' War in 1525, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

²⁰ Eduard Bernstein, *Cromwell and Communism*, trans. H. J. Stenning (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930); first published as *Sozialismus und Demokratie in der großen englischen Revolution* (see note 14).

²¹ See, e.g., David W. Petegorsky, *Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War: A Study of the Social Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940).

²² *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley, with an Appendix of Documents Related to the Digger Movement*, ed. George H. Sabine (1941; New York: Russell & Russell, 1965).

came only latterly to concede that Winstanley's Christianity was important to his way of thinking.²³ Hill included no religious tracts in his edition of Winstanley's writings, though he offered a few poems from them.²⁴ Only when his treatment of Winstanley was challenged in a leading journal of church history did he temporize and retrench.²⁵ He responded with an important monograph on Winstanley's religious views,²⁶ and the issue was soon laid to rest.²⁷ Although Hill pointed to serious methodological flaws in the accusing article, the authors raised a powerful case for Winstanley "as he said he was," that is, as a Christian visionary.

Since then, a few writers have tried to bring the religious and political writings together and to see a connection between them.²⁸ Fewer still have considered the influence of radical ideas from outside politics or religion such as those of Paracelsus and the alchemical philosophers.²⁹ With very few exceptions,³⁰ the emphasis has fallen on Winstanley's political thought. There is good reason for this: the religious ideas are not unusual for the time and do not claim the same attention as the political ones. However, they clearly have a part in the formation of the later political thought, which culminates in Winstanley's utopian *Law of Freedom* and its most memorable statement: "*True Commonwealths freedom lies in the free Enjoyment of the Earth.*"³¹

The publication of a scholarly edition of Winstanley's complete works in 2010 has placed his five religious tracts in one volume (three of them reprinted for the first time in 350 years) and his thirteen political writings in a second, smaller volume, accompanied there by his five extant letters. The editors' preface invites

²³ Winstanley figures importantly in a book which reclaimed various English radicals from the "lunatic fringe" of history: Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas in the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), esp. 13.

²⁴ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom and Other Writings*, ed. Christopher Hill (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1973), 390–91. Hill discusses Winstanley's religion as a source of "myths" resembling those of a poet; see "Introduction," 54–57.

²⁵ Lotte Mulligan, John K. Graham, and Judith Richards, "Winstanley: A Case for the Man as He Said He Was," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (1977): 57–75.

²⁶ Christopher Hill, *The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley*, Past & Present Supplement, 5 (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978).

²⁷ The authors of the earlier article reviewed Hill's monograph in "The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley," *Past & Present* 89 (Nov. 1980): 145–46, to which Hill wrote "A Rejoinder," *Past & Present* 89 (Nov. 1980): 147–51.

²⁸ See, e.g., T. Wilson Hayes, *Winstanley the Digger: A Literary Analysis of Radical Ideas in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

²⁹ See, e.g., David W. Mulder *The Alchemy of Revolution: Gerrard Winstanley's Occultism and Seventeenth-Century English Communism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), esp. 52–53.

³⁰ See, e.g., Oliver Lutaud, *Winstanley: Socialisme et Christianisme sous Cromwell*. Études Anglaises, 66 (Paris: Didier, 1976).

³¹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform; or, True Magistracy Restored* (London: Giles Calvert, 1652), 17; CWGW, 2: 295.

a fresh assessment of the *œuvre* as a whole. They point out that Winstanley shares many of the religious heterodoxies found in his contemporary John Milton, including Arianism and mortalism. They also note that his religious thought was anti-clerical rather than anti-Christian. (That is perhaps the chief point of resemblance with Müntzer.) They also see signs of Anabaptism, antinominalism, and universalism, and they conclude:

Repelled by the practices and teachings of a professional ministry, Winstanley was nevertheless deeply religious and shared all these heterodox beliefs, as well as a strong belief in complete liberty of conscience.³²

In the next section, I will show how he came to champion this last freedom, which the learned divine Jeremy Taylor called “the liberty of prophesying.”³³

2. Winstanley’s Early Life (1609–1649)

Born in 1609, Winstanley was almost forty when he led the Diggers to Saint George’s Hill. Ten years earlier, he had been a successful cloth merchant in London, a freeman of the Merchant Taylors’ Company and the owner of a shop in the parish of Saint Olave Jewry.³⁴ He married and took an apprentice. He joined the vestry of his parish church and became involved in political discussions. As civil war loomed in 1643, and the king threatened to side with Irish Catholics, he voted to sign the Solemn League and Covenant between Parliamentary forces and Protestant Covenanters in Scotland. However, his business was failing amidst the uncertainties of the age, and by the time war broke out he was bankrupt. Hounded by creditors, he left London in December 1643. He moved to Cobham, in Surrey, where his father-in-law, a London barber-surgeon, held property as a yeoman or tenant farmer. Here he made the rather dramatic career change from haberdashery to agriculture. He became a grazier, who pastured cattle and provided their winter feed. He also traded in foodstuffs.

The career change seemed sensible, for his new home in the village of Cobham Street was located on the Portsmouth road, midway between London and a large port on the English Channel. It was known as a market town, and he might have prospered if the weather had cooperated. As it happened, though, the 1640s had

³² CWGW, 1: 50.

³³ Jeremy Taylor, *θεολογια εκλεκτικη: A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying. Shewing the Unreasonableness of prescribing to other mens Faith, and the inequity of persecuting differing opinions* (London: R. Royston, 1647).

³⁴ J. D. Davis and J. C. Alsop, “Gerrard Winstanley,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <http://www.oxforddnb.com> (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011). Unless otherwise indicated, biographical details about Winstanley come from this excellent entry.

some of the worst weather of the century; the summers alternated between drought and flood, while the winters were harsh. There were widespread crop failures, and, by the end of 1647, Winstanley was forced to declare bankruptcy a second time. The experience precipitated a profound depression, and for weeks he sat alone, reading the Bible and praying. At some point in the early months of 1648, he experienced an “overflowing Anointing” by the spirit of God or what he termed the “Spirit of Righteousnesse.” At a time when his heart was full of “deadnesse and uncomfortableness,” he wrote: “I have been filled with such peace, light, life, and fullnes, that if I had two pair of hands, I had matter enough revealed, to have kept them writing a long time.”³⁵

Though largely self-taught, Winstanley wrote with remarkable fluency by any standard. He published four volumes of theology in 1648, and he completed a fifth volume in the first weeks of 1649. All the books were printed for the London stationer Giles Calvert, whose bookshop “at the black Spread-Eagle at the west end of [Saint] Pauls [Churchyard]” in London was later described as “the forge of the devil from whence so many blasphemous, lying scandalous pamphlets for many years past have been spread over the land.”³⁶ Calvert’s publications covered a wide range of radical thought, from theology (Jacob Böhme) to theosophy (the Rosicrucian manifestos) and science (Samuel Hartlib). He alone could have put Winstanley in touch with fellow travelers of various stripes and undoubtedly helped to put his books in the hands of sympathetic readers. Winstanley maintained, however, that the ideas in the Digger pamphlets came to him directly:

all that I have writ concerning the matter of Digging, I never read it in any book, nor received it from any mouth; though since the light was given me, I have met with divers, to whom the same light of truth is revealed.³⁷

The voice that spoke to Winstanley was reassuring, and the five theological tracts offered reassurance to other Christians, reassurance that there was a purpose behind the travails they faced daily. Like Milton in *Paradise Lost*, he writes to “justifie the wayes of God to men.”³⁸ However, his God resembles that of the ancient Gnostics in one respect and anticipates that of the Deists in another. For him, the true God could not want his chief creation to suffer the repression imposed in the name of religion; that would be the work of a false God, or anti-Christ, created by the oppressors. God created man in his image, and man is a

³⁵ Gerrard Winstanley, *Severall Pieces Collected in One Volume* (London: Giles Calvert, 1650), A2r–v; CWGW, 1: 98.

³⁶ Quoted in Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 301–02. See Ariel Hessayon, “Giles Calvert,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (last accessed on July 29, 2011).

³⁷ Winstanley, *Severall Pieces Collected*, A3v–A4r; CWGW, 1: 99.

³⁸ *Paradise Lost*, book 1, line 25.

rational animal; therefore, the voice of God must be the voice of reason itself, and indeed the voice tells him to call it Reason.

If we read the five tracts in the order of their arrangement in the newly collected works, which is most likely that of their composition and original publication, we see a clear progression in the social aspect of Winstanley's thought. The first tract is a fairly conventional commentary on the Book of Revelation. It is significant mainly for its insistence that "Christ hath begun to reign in his Saints."³⁹ The next is a dispensationalist tract, identifying the various dispensations, or revelations, in the history of mankind and moving from innocence and conscience in Genesis to grace and the Millennium in Revelation. Winstanley asserts that what he writes "was given me of my Father" and "is not a spirit of private fancie, but it is agreeable to the Written word."⁴⁰ The third tract asserts that no one needs spiritual counsel beyond the Spirit of God the Father which dwells in everyone:

if you subject yourself to this mighty governour, the spirit of righteousness within your selves, he will bring you into community with the whole Globe, so that in time you shall come to know as you are known [1 Corinthians 13: 22], and you shall not need to run after others, to learn of them what God is, for you are a perfect creation, every one of himself; so you shall see, and feel that this spirit is the great governour in you, in righteousness; and when you know the truth, the truth shall make you free from the bondage of the covetous [John 8: 22], and proud flesh, the Serpent that holds you under slavery all your life time.⁴¹

In the preface, Winstanley states that he does not intend to teach others, only to help them find the inner voice of God, which speaks through his Spirit (the Paraclete of John's letters in the New Testament):

I do not write to teach, I only declare what I know, you may teach me, for you have the fountaine of life in you as well as I, and therefore he is called the Lord, because he rules not in one, but in everyone through the globe, and so we being many, are knit together into one body, & are to be made all of one heart, and one minde, by that one spirit which enlightens every man.⁴²

With this divine guidance, readers would enter what Winstanley called "the Saints Paradise." He later remarked, "some have said, I had done well if I had left off writing when I had finished the Saints Paradise."⁴³ These people saw signs of his

³⁹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Breaking of the Day of God* (London: Giles Calvert, 1648), A1r; CWGW, 1: 101. The reign of Christ is predicted in Revelation 19:15.

⁴⁰ Ierrard (sic) Winstanley, *The Myserie of God, Concerning the whole Creation, Mankinde. To Be Made known to every man and woman, after seven Dispensations and Seasons of Time are passed over. Printed in the Yeere, 1648* (No place: no publisher), signature A2r, A3v; CWGW, 1: 255, 257.

⁴¹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Saints Paradise* (London: Giles Calvert, 1648), A4r; CWGW, 1: 315.

⁴² Winstanley, *The Saints Paradise* (London: Giles Calvert, 1648), A4r-v; CWGW, 1: 316.

⁴³ Winstanley, *Severall Pieces Collected*, A3v; CWGW, 1: 99.

later Digger convictions in the last two theological tracts. Yet even in the third Winstanley “conflates all secular power into one oppressive formation”—a concept which, as his most recent editors note, “becomes a major theme in his later writings.”⁴⁴

The fourth theological pamphlet begins with an open letter “To the Schollars of Oxford and Cambridge, and to all that call them-selves Ministers of the Gospel in City and Country.” Winstanley advises scholars not to claim access to “original Scripture” just because they can read Hebrew and Greek. After all, changes may have crept into the texts and may even have been placed there deliberately. The texts have flowed through the Spirit, after all, and “the Spirit is not confined to your Universities, but it spreads from East to West, and enlightens sons and daughters in all parts.”⁴⁵ The word *daughters* is significant. One student of “visionary women” in seventeenth-century England has noted that Winstanley thinks women have every right to prophesy and preach.⁴⁶ This first introductory note is followed by an address “To the gentle Reader,” who is asked to consider the case of one William Everard, a former soldier in the Parliamentary army and a follower of the prophet John Pordage. Everard was imprisoned on charges of blasphemy after giving a speech in the town of Kingston, only a few miles from Cobham on the road to London. Winstanley was present on the occasion and similarly charged but not detained. Everard later became an associate of Winstanley and a leader of the digging at Saint George’s Hill.⁴⁷ His name appeared first on the first Digger tract, and historians once regarded him as the tract’s main author.⁴⁸

The last of the theological tracts, *The New Law of Righteousness*, has the suggestive subtitle “Budding forth, in restoring the whole Creation from the bondage of the

⁴⁴ CWGW, 1: 400–01, note 366.

⁴⁵ Gerrard Winstanley, *Truth Lifting up its Head against Scandals* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), A3r; CWGW, 1: 410.

⁴⁶ Phyllis Mack, “The Prophet and Her Audience: Gender and Knowledge in the World Turned Upside Down,” *Reviving the English Revolution: Reflections and Elaborations on the Work of Christopher Hill*, ed. Geof Eley and William Hunt (London: Verso, 1988), 139–52, esp. 146. Also see Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). And for Winstanley’s proto-feminist perspective, see Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 123.

⁴⁷ Ariel Hessayon, “Everard, William,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com> (last accessed on July 29, 2011). Also see the same author’s entry on “Pordage, John,” an associate of Everard and a source of his radical religious ideas.

⁴⁸ Gerrard Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (London: no publisher, 1649). CWGW uses the alternate title *A Declaration from the Poor oppressed People of England* (2: 30). The names of sixteen men appeared on the tract, with Winstanley’s at the top of the second column in the original edition.

curse," i.e., the Fall of Man.⁴⁹ The preface is dated January 26, 1649, just four days before the execution of King Charles I. By this point Winstanley had worked out the theological arguments behind the Digger tracts. Following the typology of Saint Paul, he regarded the Adam of Genesis as the "figure" (Greek *typos*) of Christ (Romans 5:19).⁵⁰ Through his primal sin, Adam had condemned mankind to bondage and death, from which Christ as the second Adam would release it: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15: 22). The old Adam lived on in the tyrants of the day, but would soon be replaced. Winstanley wrote:

O thou proud selfish governing *Adam*, in this Land called *England*! Know that the cries of the poor, whom thou laieth heavy oppressions upon, is heard.
This is unrighteous *Adam*, that dammed up the water springs of universall liberty, and brought the Creation under the curse of bondage, sorrow and tears: But when the earth becomes a common treasury as it was in the beginning, and the King of Righteousness comes to rule in every ones heart, then he kils the first *Adam*; for covetousnesse thereby is killed.⁵¹

Here and elsewhere Winstanley plays on the words *Adam* and *a dam*; he even hyphenates to name as *A-dam*. The fall of Adam represents a damming up of the passage between heaven and earth, and Winstanley blames the congestion on covetousness. In his analysis, mankind will return to its first happy condition when covetousness is done away with, and private ownership with it, so that earth is again a "common treasury or commonwealth." Winstanley reverses the dam metaphor when he says, "this second *Adam* Christ, the restorer stops or dames up the running of those stinking waters of self-interest, and causes the water of life and liberty to run plentifully."⁵²

All men and women in *England*, are al children of this Land, and the earth is the Lords [Psalm 22: 1], not particular mens that claims a proper interest in it above others, which is the devils power.⁵³

⁴⁹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The New Law of Righteousness* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), A1r; CWGW, 1: 472.

⁵⁰ On Winstanley's myth of the fall and rebirth of Adam, see George M. Schulman, *Radicalism and Reverence: The Political Thought of Gerrard Winstanley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 19–71.

⁵¹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The New Law of Righteousnesse* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), 7; CWGW, 1: 482. The title "King of Righteousness" is the translation of the name of Melchizedek given in Hebrews 7: 2. Winstanley would later assign the title to Reason, in *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, 4; CWGW, 2: 7.

⁵² Winstanley, *New Law of Righteousness*, 7; CWGW, 1: 482.

⁵³ Winstanley, *New Law of Righteousness*, 55; CWGW, 1: 518.

The major obstacle to this paradise on earth was the “enclosure”: the act of “converting pieces of common land into private property” and the space thus enclosed.⁵⁴

For as the inclosures are called such a mans Land, and such a mans Land; so the Commons and Heath, are called the common-peoples, and let the world see who labours the earth in righteousness, and those to whom the Lord gives the blessing, let them be the people that shal inherit the earth [Matthew 5: 5].⁵⁵

With the word *enclosure*, Winstanley identified a legal problem that originated under the feudal system more than four centuries earlier and persisted for another two centuries.⁵⁶ The problem of access to unused land, or commons, lay at the heart of his political action. It led to the digging at Saint George’s Hill.

3. The Land Question

The laws governing enclosures belonged to a whole set of feudal laws that Winstanley traced back to the Norman Conquest of 1066. He referred to these laws as the “Norman yoke, and Babylonish power,” maintained by descendants of William the Conqueror down through Charles I.⁵⁷ Only when they were put aside could the people enjoy true freedom.

The feudal system, taken broadly to include the peasantry as well as lords and vassals, was brought to England with the Normans. As Jacques Le Goff, among others, has pointed out, feudalism was most severe where it came last, in the areas controlled by the Normans—in Normandy itself, in Sicily, and in England.⁵⁸ As the centuries passed, and the feudal system turned into the monarchical one, pressures increased on landlords to fund the royal army rather than fight in it themselves, and this at the time when cities and towns were emerging as financial centers in their own right, limiting the financial power of the aristocracy. The pressures were borne mainly by those at the bottom of the social scale, by the yeomen who farmed land owned by the lords and by the day laborers whom the yeomen or tenant farmers employed.

⁵⁴ OED, “enclosure” noun 1a and 4a.

⁵⁵ Winstanley, *New Law of Righteousness*, 55; CWGW, 1: 518.

⁵⁶ Wikipedia, “Inclosure Acts” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclosure_Acts (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011).

⁵⁷ Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, 8; CWGW, 2: 13. See CWGW, 1: 143 note 153.

⁵⁸ Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilisation, 400–1500*, trans. Julia Barrow (1964; London: Folio Society, 2011), 94–96, 111. Le Goff follows the comprehensive model in Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon, 2 vols. (1939; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

In England, there was a growing divide between the landlords and yeomen, on the one hand, and the landless laborers, on the other. Anticipating the trends of modern agribusiness, many landlords sought economies of scale; some switched from growing wheat to raising sheep or cattle; very often they enclosed lands and evicted tenants. Meanwhile, the peasantry took increasingly to squatting on unused lands, which by some estimates accounted for as much as one-third of England. Hill has pointed out that there were people who called themselves Diggers and Levellers during uprisings in the Midlands at the start of the century as well as peasants who protested the enclosure of drained fens in Essex and of royal forests in the north and west of England.⁵⁹

In Cobham the tensions increased as landlords and yeomen tried to reach markets in other towns. In the process, they tried to enclose former commons, while cottagers and commoners sought to extend their historic rights. Under customary laws dating back to Norman rule, the landlords had the upper hand, for jurisdiction lay with manorial courts appointed by the lords.⁶⁰ Winstanley had experience in the manorial court in Cobham when, in the winter of 1646, he was charged and fined for removing peat from a commons, presumably to heat his home. Seven others had dug alongside him and faced the same charge, including two women. The court records leave some doubt about their motives—whether they had requested permission to dig, or thought they would be excused because four of the men served on the town council, or simply wished to protest the injustice of being forced to purchase a commodity that was freely available. Winstanley does not mention the event in his published writings, and we cannot know how the experience affected him.

What we do know is that the voice of Reason came to him while he was in a “trance.” In the first Digger tract he wrote (and the words are unmistakably his own):

this work to make the earth a Common Treasury was shewed us by Voice in Trance and out of Trance, which words were these:

Work together, Eat Bread together, Declare this all abroad.

Which voice was heard three times: And in obedience to the Spirit we have declared this by word of mouth, as occasion was offered. Secondly, we have declared it by writing, which others may read. Thirdly, we have now begun to declare it by action in digging up the common land, & casting in seed, that we may eat our bread together in righteousness. And every one that comes to work,

⁵⁹ Hill, “Introduction,” 21 (see note 22). On the royal forests see the contribution to this volume by Marilyn Sandidge. The only such forests in Surrey were on the border of Hampshire and were sufficiently small that Edward III disafforested the whole county in 1329; see Raymond Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Stroud, England: Alan Sutton, 1991), 156–66.

⁶⁰ On customary laws and the manorial courts, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

shall eat the fruit of their own labours, one having as much freedome in the fruit of the earth, as another. Another Voice that was heard, was this,
Israel shall neither take Hire, nor give Hire.

And if so, then certainly none shall say, this is my Land, work for me, and I'll give you wages. For the earth is the Lords⁶¹

The word *together* is key. Like the early Christians who “were together, and had all things in common” (Acts 2: 44), the Diggers found strength in their communal or proto-communist lifestyle.

There is one outside account of Winstanley's argument, presented by a secretary to Sir Thomas Fairfax, Lord General of Cromwell's New Model Army. After a yeoman landholder appealed to Parliament about the digging at Saint George's Hill, Fairfax sent a troop of soldiers to investigate on April 19 and received a visit from Winstanley and Everard the next day. Determined to see for himself, Fairfax visited the Diggers in May:

As his Excellency the Lord Generall came from Gilford to London he went to view the diggers at St. Geo: Hill in Surry, with his officers and attendants, where they found about 12. of them hard at work and amongst them one Wistanley [sic] was the chief Speaker to whom several Questions were propounded by the Officers, and the Lord Generall made a short speech by way of admonition to them, and this Wistanley returned sober answers, though they gave little satisfaction (if at all) in regard of the strangenesse of the action.

Discussion turned to the exact status of the land:

It was urged that Commons were as justly due to the Lords as any other Lands. They answered that these were Crown Lands, where they digged and that the King that possesst them by the Norman Conquest being dead, they were returned againe to the Common people of England who might improve them if they would take the paines, that for those who would come dig with them, they should have the benefit equal with them, and eat of their bread but they would not force any, applying it to the Golden rule, to do to others as we would be done unto [Matthew 7: 12]; some officers wisht they had no further plot in what they did, and that no more was intended then what they did pretend.⁶²

⁶¹ Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard Advanced*, 10; CWGW, 2: 14–15. The trance and voice are mentioned in Winstanley, *New Law of Righteousness*, 48; CWGW, 1:513. In the King James Bible, the word *hire* is associated with prostitution; see, e.g., Deuteronomy 23: 18, Ezekiel 16:41, and Micah 1: 7.

⁶² *The Speeches of the Lord General Fairfax, And the Officers of the Armie to The Diggers at St. Georges Hill in Surrey, and the Diggers severall Answers and Replies thereunto* (London: For R.W., 1640), 40. The London stationer George Thomason dated his copy May 31.

The word *pretend* is used here in the now obsolete sense of “assert” or “declare.”⁶³ Some officers, then, took Winstanley at his word, and indeed there had been a long tradition of levelling sentiment in the Parliamentary army.⁶⁴ These soldiers wanted no part in dismantling the community, should Fairfax or a local authority give the order.

The reference to “Crown Lands” is significant. It suggests that the hill was part of a royal hunting ground, or “chase,”⁶⁵ and might therefore be less directly controlled by the gentry than other commons—for example, the marshy area where Winstanley and others had gathered peat. He realized then, or soon became aware, that the new government of England had begun to confiscate royal forests and other lands belonging to the former king and to officials in the now disestablished Church of England. He learned that some former soldiers were taking advantage of the opportunity to become landholders, and he appealed to their sense of fairness in another open letter:

you were Volunteers in the Wars, and the common people have paid you for your pains so largely, that some of us have not left our selves hardly bread to eate; and therefore if there be a spoil to be gathered of crown Lands, Deans, Bishops Forrests Lands and commons, that is to come to the poor commons freely; and you ought to be content with your wages . . . and you ought not to go buy one of another that which is common to all the Nation . . . We that are the poor commons, that paid our Money, and gave you free Quarter, have as much right in those crown Lands and Lands of the spoil as you . . .⁶⁶

His point in both documents was that land is the source of England’s wealth. What had been seized by the Conqueror and given to his favorites should not be sold off; it should be returned to the people.

Unlike Fairfax, the gentry of Cobham and Weybridge were mostly staunch Royalists. (The one exception, a Sir Francis Drake of no relation to the famous explorer, was among those who took the Diggers to court.) They looked to Parliament and its army to restore order, but Fairfax declined to act until the matter went through the courts. Ironically, it was Winstanley who first took the landlords to court, protesting that they had hired ruffians to dig up their crops, set fire to their dwellings, and beat them savagely.⁶⁷ Only then did the plaintiffs Thomas Sutton and Sir Anthony Vincent bring legal charges of trespass, theft, and

⁶³ OED, “pretend,” verb 1b.

⁶⁴ Hill, *The Experience of Defeat*, 17 (see note 8).

⁶⁵ OED, “chase,” noun 3.

⁶⁶ Gerrard Winstanley, *A New-Yeers Gift Sent to the Parliament and Armie* (London: Giles Calvert, 1650), 12–13; CWGW, 2: 118.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Gerrard Winstanley, *An Appeal to the House of Commons* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), A1r; CWGW, 2: 65.

vagrancy against the Diggers; while the local parson Robert Platt, himself a landholder through marriage, accused them of idleness and atheism. The court found in favor of the plaintiffs, and the army was sent in to evict the Diggers from Saint George's Hill. Other court cases continued for another two years involving similar communities of Diggers on other common areas in the Hundred of Emley-Bridge, Surrey. The Diggers represented themselves in court, as Winstanley notes in verses attached to one tract:

No money's paid, nor never shall, to a Lawyer of his man
To plead our case, for therein we'll do the best we can.⁶⁸

They seem to have regarded Winstanley's tracts as so many legal briefs.

In an open letter to Fairfax, dated June 1 and hand-delivered a few days later, Winstanley raised questions about the rights of noble families to lands granted to them by the monarchy (see Fig. 1). He asked:

Whether Lords of Mannours have not lost their Royalty to the common land, since the common People of England, as well as some of the Gentry, have, conquered King *Charles*, and recovered themselves from under the Norman Conquest?⁶⁹

Unlike the more radical Müntzer, he did not want to seize gentry's land, even their recent enclosures. He simply wanted to stop the practice of taking common land away from the common people.

The vagrancy laws were especially difficult; indeed, a man could become a vagrant by digging on a commons rather than doing farm labor for wages, and could be called a vagabond if he slept at Saint George's Hill rather than his house in town. Winstanley reminded Fairfax that the Diggers sought peace, not conflict, and wanted only "to improve the Commons."⁷⁰ He later protested the violence perpetrated upon them at Saint George's Hill and his own arrest there, "for a Trespass, in Digging upon the Common Land."⁷¹ As for peace, he told the army, there was no better way to protect it than to ensure that all people had free access to the riches of the earth:

if every one did but quietly enjoy the earth for food and raiment, there would be no wars, prisons, nor gallows, and this action which man calls theft would be no sin, for universall love never made it a sin, but the power of covetousness made that a sin, and made Laws to punish it . . .⁷²

⁶⁸ Gerrard Winstanley, *A Watch-Word to the City of London, and the Armie* (1650?), 16; CWGW 2: 99.

⁶⁹ Winstanley, *Letter to the Lord Fairfax*, 7 (see note 4); CWGW, 2: 49. For information on the plaintiffs see CWGW, 2: 451–55.

⁷⁰ Winstanley, *Letter to the Lord Fairfax*, 1; CWGW, 2: 44.

⁷¹ Gerrard Winstanley, *An Appeal to the House of Commons* (London: Giles Calvert, 1649), A1r; CWGW, 2: 65.

⁷² Winstanley, *A New-Years Gift*, 30–31; CWGW, 2: 134.

4. The Religious Question

Hill has suggested that Winstanley's "Voice" was a seventeenth-century formulation for what we would call "a sudden mental clarification." He adds that Winstanley's "later dismissal of a personal God" shows that he did not truly "rely on the promptings of an inner voice."⁷³ He cites in evidence a passage on "Divinity" from Winstanley's final published tract, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*.⁷⁴ Here Winstanley draws his usual distinction between the God who is quoted to defend oppressions of all sorts and the God of private experience. He cites as support Winstanley disdain for the churches' teachings about "a personal God, personal angels, and a local place of glory."⁷⁵ However, Winstanley continues:

For my own part, my spirit hath waded deep to finde the bottom of this divining spiritual Doctrine: and the more I searched, the more I was at a loss; and I never came to quiet rest, and to know God in my sprit, *till* I came to the knowledge of the things in this Book.⁷⁶

That knowledge is that the oppressive God of "pie in the sky by and by" and of the older brother trying to take advantage of the younger:

saith the elder Brother, *you must not trust your own Reason and Understanding, but you must beleeeve what is written and what is told you; and if you will not believe, your Damnation will be the greater.*

*I cannot beleeeve, saith the younger Brother, that our righteous Creator should be so partial in his Dispensations of the Earth, seeing our bodies cannot live upon the Earth without the use of the Earth.*⁷⁷

The passage is anti-clerical rather than anti-Christian. Its point in the tract is to show that a true commonwealth has no use of a professional clergy.

Winstanley nevertheless sees a function for "*a Commonwealths Ministry*," a ministry of all whose purpose is to educate people about the commonwealth's laws and its place in providential history. Above all, ministers must speak from experience rather than "imaginary study." By doing so, they can help people "To attain the true knowledg of God (who is the Spirit of the whole Creation)":

And if the Earth were set free from Kingly Bondage, so that every one were sure to have a free livelyhood, and if this liberty were granted, then many secrets of God, and

⁷³ Hill, "Introduction" (see note 22), 24.

⁷⁴ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (London: Giles Calvert, 1652), 60–63; CWGW, 2: 344–48.

⁷⁵ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 61; CWGW, 2: 345.

⁷⁶ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 61; CWGW, 2: 346 (my italics).

⁷⁷ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 61; CWGW, 2: 346–47.

his Works in Nature, would be made publike, which men now adays keep secret to get a living by; so that this Kingly Bondage is the cause of the spreading ignorance in the Earth. But when Commonwealths Freedom is established, and Pharasaical or Kingly Slavery cast out, then will *knowledg cover the Earth, as the waters cover the Seas* [Habbakkuk 2:14], and not till then.

He who is chosen Minister that year to read shall not be the only man to make Sermons or Speeches: but every one who hath any experience, and is able to speak of any Art or Language, or of the Nature of the Heavens above, or of the Earth below, shall have free liberty to speak when they offer themselves, and in a civil manner desire an audience, and appoint his day.⁷⁸

Responding to critics, Hill later suggested that Winstanley was a pantheist in his Digger days, rather than an atheist. This makes sense insofar as he sought the Creator in the creation, as the last quotation makes clear. However, pantheism was not inconsistent with his already heterodox Christianity. If by a personal God one means a Creator who cares about the beings He or She has created, and whose numinosity can be directly experienced in some way, then Winstanley cannot be said to have lost his faith. If anything, he lost interest in the details of biblical interpretation as he thought more about social issues facing people of his day. Hill suggests rightly that Winstanley's religious pamphlets may have been influenced by his economic circumstances.⁷⁹ But by the same token, his political pamphlets may be said to show the influence of religious convictions, notably his belief in a reasonable and loving God who wants people to be free.

Debate about the relative role of religion in the Digger movement has continued in the popular culture with the 1976 film *Winstanley*.⁸⁰ The film was based largely on a novel by David Caute, who had attended lectures by Hill in the 1950s. Unlike Hill, Caute considered religion basic to Winstanley's thought and worked religious messages of Winstanley's into the dialogue. For example, Winstanley's first speech to his fellow Diggers, delivered as Parliamentary troops approach Saint George's Hill, reads:

"Have confidence in the Lord, Tom [Haydon]. Remember Christ is the Head Leveller and works through his chosen servants. The flesh has led men to imagine God in some throne of glory beyond the sky, a belief which the priests and parsons like our worthy Platt encourage, denying that God will infuse His spirit into humble men, Tom, like you and I, Tom, as formerly he did with a fisherman and a tent maker. They claim that only those with human ordination may teach, but England is now cast into the fire to be purged of dross and set free."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 57; CWGW, 2: 341–342.

⁷⁹ Hill, "Introduction" (see note 22), 25; also see the work cited in note 26

⁸⁰ *Winstanley*, directed by Kevin Brownlow; performances by Miles Halliwell, Jerome Willis, et al., BFI Productions, 1976.

⁸¹ David Caute, *Comrade Jacob* (1961; New York: Pantheon, 1962), 32. Also see Raimund Schäffner,

The cover blurb for the American edition described the Diggers as “a rebellious group of mystics and Biblical socialists led by the saintlike Gerrard Winstanley.” Nevertheless, the director cut the religious language from the film, and Caute, in protest, withdrew his screenwriting credit. Several decades later, he lamented the loss:

Winstanley is a vivid commentary on the physical condition of 17th century rural England, but it is reluctant to penetrate the intense religious motivations of the time. Winstanley believed that to know the secrets of nature is to know the works of God within the creation.⁸²

Another explanation of Winstanley’s “Voice” and its commanding rhythms was put forth by his contemporary Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist. While Winstanley was defending the Diggers in court and in the press, More was engaged in a knock-down pamphlet debate with Thomas Vaughan, a disciple of Cornelius Agrippa, editor of the Rosicrucian manifestos in their English translation, and twin brother of the Metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan. Licking his wounds after the second round, More resolved to end the debate and devoted his energies to the matter of religious enthusiasm, the condition of being possessed by a god or enthused (Greek *en theos*).⁸³ He composed a systematic essay on “The Nature, Causes, Kinds, and Cure, of Enthusiasme” and arranged to have it printed with reprints of his tracts on Thomas Vaughan, the obvious implication being that Vaughan suffered from religious mania. He had already mentioned melancholy and excessive spirits, and the relatively new and negative word *enthusiasm* fit the diagnosis nicely. He even used it to explain the forcefulness of a fanatic’s prose:

For a man illiterate, as he was, but of good parts, by constant reading of the Bible will naturally contract a more winning and commanding Rhetorick then those that are learned, the intermixture of tongues and of artificial phrases debasing their style, and making it sound more after the manner of men, though ordinarily there may be more of God in it then in that of the Enthusiast.⁸⁴

Especially after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the term *enthusiast* became a convenient label for anyone who based his fervent claims on a revelation

“The Re-Emergence of the Diggers: David Caute’s *Comrade Jacob*,” *Literature & History* 16.1 (Spring 2007): 1–25.

⁸² David Caute, “Looking Back in Regret at Winstanley,” *The Guardian* (Oct. 17, 2008) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/oct/17/david-caute-winstanley-comrade-jacob> (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011).

⁸³ *OED*, “enthusiasm,” noun 1.

⁸⁴ Philophilus Perriasiastes [Henry More], *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, or, A Discourse of The Nature, Causes, Kinds, and Cure, of Enthusiasme* (Cambridge: W. Morden, 1656), 34. See Susie I. Tucker, *Enthusiasm: A Study in Semantic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

—whether the claims concerned science or philosophy, as with Vaughan, or religion and politics, as in Winstanley's case. More's leading example of religious enthusiasm was David George, who founded the Family of Love, in Delft, in 1556. But Familist ideas infiltrated the Digger community, chiefly through Everard's connection to John Pordage, who espoused Familist or Anabaptist ideas.⁸⁵

5. The Political Question (1649–1660)

Winstanley's final pamphlet, *The Law of Freedom*, was "Humbly presented to *Oliver Cromwel*, General of the Common-wealths Army in England, Scotland, and Ireland." Cromwell was arguably the most powerful man in the British Isles, but Parliament had him fighting wars in Scotland and Ireland when there was work to be done at home. With all due respect, Winstanley told the future Lord Governor that he had a decision to make:

And now you have the Power of the Land in your hand, you must do one of these two things: First, either set the Land free to the oppressed Commoners, who assisted you and payd the Army their wages; and then you will fulfil the Scriptures and your own Engagements [i.e., promises], and so take possession of your deserved Honor. Or secondly, you must onely remove the [Norman] Conquerors Power out of the Kings hand into other mens, maintaining the old Laws still: And then your Wisdom and Honor is blasted for ever⁸⁶

The work of rescuing Englishmen from "Kingly Bondage" was only half complete, for the old bonds were still controlled by the late monarchy's favorites—by the nobles and landed gentry and, to a lesser extent, by their appointees in the courts and churches. Winstanley was a pacifist, opposed to "tumult and Fighting," and did not want to see anything like *la Terreur* during the French Revolution; however, he saw no need to appease the defeated royalists or to give the spoils of war to a new elite. A quatrain on the title page put the challenge to England herself:

In thee oh England, is the law arising up to shine,
If thou receive and practise it, the crown will be thine:
If thou reject and stil remain, a froward Son to be,
Another Land will receive it, and take the crown from thee.⁸⁷

Like Milton later in the decade, Winstanley feared that England might not want the liberty that God had given it and might choose what Milton called "a captain

⁸⁵ See note 47.

⁸⁶ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 4; CWGW, 2: 279.

⁸⁷ Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, A1r; CWGW, 278.

back for *Egypt*.”⁸⁸ Behind such statements was a long history of “successionist” theology, in which one people would succeed another in God’s favor. Just as Christendom had succeeded Israel, another country might succeed England. Such logic lies behind what is known as American exceptionalism: the belief that God sheds a special grace on the United States and the concomitant fear that this grace is threatened by some hot-button issue.

One might argue that Winstanley was right. Cromwell not only lost his saintly crown; he lost his head. After the restoration of the monarchy, two years after his death in 1658, his body was exhumed and beheaded. The poor, who had fought for the good old cause, had little reason to resist the return of the king, for they had seen little or no benefit from the redistribution of crown lands. Under Cromwell’s leadership, the government had sold many crown lands and had deforested others to raise money.

After being evicted from the land at Saint George’s Hill, Winstanley penned a “watch-word” to Londoners, warning that the Civil War was not over:

William the Conquerours Army begins to gather into head againe, and the old *Norman* Prerogative Law is the place of their rendezvous: for though their chief Captain *Charles* be gone, yet his Colonells, which are Lords of Mannours, his Councillours and Divines, which are our Lawyers and Priests, his inferior officers and Souldiers, which are the Freeholders, and Land-lords, all which did steal away our Land from us when they killed and murdered our Fathers in that *Norman* conquest: And the Bailliffes that are slaves to their covetous lusts and all the ignorant bawling women against our digging for freedome, are the snapsack boyes and the ammunition sluts that follow the *Norman* Camp.⁸⁹

It seemed to him that the “battells now are all spirituall”—what Blake called “mental fight.”⁹⁰ It was a war against covetousness, a fight for personal freedom and opportunity.

⁸⁸ John Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth; and the excellence thereof compar’d with the inconveniencies and dangers of readmitting Kingship in the Nation*, 2nd ed. (London: for the author, 1660), 107; echoing Numbers 14: 4. This passage, with much else, was added to the edition published earlier in the year, as it became increasingly apparent that England was on the verge of restoring the monarchy. For broader discussions on pacifism in the premodern era, see the contributions to *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 8 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011).

⁸⁹ Winstanley, *Watch-Word*, 10; CWGW, 2: 92–93.

⁹⁰ Winstanley, *Watch-Word*, 15; CWGW 2: 98. See William Blake, “Jerusalem,” line 13, *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), 481. The poem has become an anthem for Britain’s working class, of which Blake was a member.

6. Winstanley's Later Life (1649–1676)

The digging at Saint George's Hill was meant to send a message. Clearly written by Winstanley, and bearing many features of his earlier religious tracts, it was "subscribed" to by thirteen fellow Diggers and represented the voices of "thousands more that give consent."⁹¹ (What vagabond or squatter or day laborer could have objected to the message?) It was written, first of all, "that the great Councell and Army of the Land may take notice of it, That there is no intent of tumult or Fighting, but only to get bread to eat, with the sweat of our brows; working together in righteousness, and eating the blessings of the Earth in peace." It was also directed to potential donors—"the great Ones of the Earth, that have been bred tenderly and cannot work," in the hope that they would make "an Offering to the work of Righteousnesse."⁹² The digging was what early Quakers called a "sign": it supported Winstanley's message of land reform with action.

In a fascinating essay, the literary historian Hugh Ormsby-Lennon has likened the Diggers to the cargo cults of Melanesia, who use the artefacts of advanced industrial society as magical objects in the hope of bringing riches upon themselves.⁹³ Though the Diggers used spades and hoes from home rather than broken radios and scrap metal retrieved from beaches, they seem to have anticipated more than the produce of a community garden. Something else would arise, and in the language of the day it had to do with the Easter message:

Now the great Creator, who is the Spirit Reason, suffered himselfe thus to be rejected and trodden under foot by the covetous proud flesh, for a certaine time limited; therefore, saith he, *The Seed out of whom the Creation did proceed, which is my selfe, shall bruise this Serpents head* [Genesis 3: 5], and restore my Creation againe from this curse and bondage; and when I the King of righteousness reigns in every man, I will be the blessing of the earth, and the joy of all Nations.⁹⁴

Like many of his time, Winstanley accepted the *senscit mundus* theme. The world was growing old or, as he said, "running up like parchment in the fire."⁹⁵ Just as his actions inspired later groups like the San Francisco Diggers of the late 1960s, with their "free store," his thoughts were echoed in the memorable words of Sam Cooke, the American soul singer and civil-rights advocate, "It's been a long time coming, but I know a change is gonna come."

⁹¹ Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, A1r; CWGW, 2: 1.

⁹² Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, 14; CWGW, 2: 19.

⁹³ Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, "Fields of Dreams: Diggers, Cargo Cults, and the *Ursprache* in Seventeenth-Century England," *The Language of Adam / Die Sprache Adams*, ed. Allison P. Coudert. Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, 84 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 193–245.

⁹⁴ Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, 3; CWGW, 2: 6.

⁹⁵ Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, 2; CWGW, 2: 5.

As usually happens, the change was incremental. During the next decade, the Parliamentary government under Cromwell cleared royal lands to raise revenue and sold off many of the most desirable ones. By the end of the century, far more land was under cultivation in England than had been at the beginning, and the country was once more a net exporter of grains and other foodstuffs.⁹⁶ However, more common lands were enclosed than ever before, and the practice continued into the late nineteenth century. In a classic study of England's working class, the historian E. P. Thompson has put the matter bluntly:

Enclosure (when all the sophistications are allowed for) was a plain enough case of class robbery, played according to fair rules of property and law laid down by a Parliament of property-owners and lawyers.⁹⁷

Some historians have argued that the enclosure laws of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were part of a large-scale shift of the English population during the Industrial Revolution and that new economies of scale helped make agriculture more profitable. There is no doubt that some small landholders profited along with the well-connected landlords. But a statistical analysis leaves little doubt that seasonal unemployment increased among farm workers, male and female, while wages were depressed.⁹⁸ By the end of the eighteenth century, some three-quarters of rural land was fenced off.⁹⁹ In Surrey alone, thirty percent of the land was enclosed by act of Parliament between 1790 and 1869, with an average of two thousand acres per enclosure.¹⁰⁰ Small farmers could no longer keep cattle when there was no available pastureland. Food prices rose as large farms specialized and food travelled farther to reach the retail market. The cost of home heating also increased, as peat and wood ceased to be resources one could gather and became commodities to be purchased at market value. When one adds to the rising costs of food and fuel the scarcity of land, the steady increases in rental costs, the growing numbers of homeless people and the unemployed, the crop failures caused by changing climactic conditions, and the reluctance of self-made merchants to pay taxes to support the monarchy, to which they owed no special loyalty, one sees conditions not unlike those today. The conditions are no longer

⁹⁶ Hill, "Introduction" (see note 22), 21.

⁹⁷ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963; New York: Random, 1964), 218.

⁹⁸ K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900*, Cambridge Studies on Population, Economy and Society in Past Time, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 138–227.

⁹⁹ Graham Murdock, "Against Enclosure," *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 443–60, esp. 443.

¹⁰⁰ Roger J. P. Kain, John Chapman, and Richard R. Oliver, *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales, 1595–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 122.

limited to Britain, but extend to North America. Where once there was no shortage of “waste land” in the New World, and where the poorest settler could expect “forty acres and a mule,” we now see foreclosures on family farms, mechanization of corporate mega-farms, pollution of the environment by industrial chemicals, and government by people representing the wealthy few rather than the hungry masses. Enclosure of public spaces has extended to the virtual space of information, with consolidation in the news media and communication industry.¹⁰¹

As for Winstanley, recent research has found that he returned to a fairly conventional life after he ceased writing. He was given use of his father-in-law’s property in what is perhaps the ironically-named manor of Ham, in Cobham, and became a respectable member of the agricultural community. He rejoined the established church, served on the vestry, and became churchwarden and an overseer of the parish poor. If he wrote any more thoughts, he did not seek to publish them. His faithful publisher lived another decade after *The Law of Freedom* appeared and continued publishing radical tracts even after he had been arrested for sedition.¹⁰² Unlike other former prophets, he did not try to explain the failure of God’s rule in England.¹⁰³ Much less did he attempt, with some popular astrologers, to predict future glory under the restored monarchy, or to apologize for his youthful radicalism.¹⁰⁴ After his wife died, he returned the land in Cobham to his in-laws and established residence in London, where he continued his business as a grain merchant. He married a wealthy Quaker woman, with whom he had three children. (No children survived from his first marriage.) He died in old age, in 1676, and was buried in a Quaker churchyard.

For the next two centuries, Saint George’s Hill remained public land and the site of regular disputes. In the Victorian Era, it was given to the newly created Earl of Ellesmere, Sir Francis Edgerton, whose family later sold nearly a thousand acres at the hilltop to the builder Walter George Tarrant, in 1911.¹⁰⁵ The first development was a professionally designed golf course. Then came tennis courts and houses on multi-acre lots. By the late twentieth century, Saint George’s Estate was one of the most desirable addresses in England, the choice of professional athletes, entrepreneurs, and such celebrities as John Lennon, Elton John, and Kate Winslett. Houses on this former waste land or commons now sell for an average

¹⁰¹ Murdock, “Against Enclosure” (see note 99), 449–60.

¹⁰² Hessayon, “Calvert, Giles” (see note 36).

¹⁰³ See Hill, *The Experience of Defeat* (see note 8), 307–09.

¹⁰⁴ For an interesting example of such apologies, see Leigh T. I. Penman, “A Seventeenth-Century Prophet Confronts his Failures: Paul Felgenhauer’s *Speculum Poenitentiae, Buß-Spiegel* (1625),” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Frühneuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus-Paracelsus-Studien, 4 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁵ Richard Norris, *The Life and Works of Walter George Tarrant, Master Builder, Creator of Saint George’s Hill Estate, Founder of Wentworth Estate, Last Lord Hafod* (privately printed, 2008).

of £3 million.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the hill remains the site of regular protests by advocates for Britain's poor and homeless, who are well aware of Winstanley as their spiritual ancestor. Recent squatters did not even have to erect makeshift dwellings; they settled in an abandoned mansion.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ For further information, see the surprisingly good article online: Wikipedia, "Saint George's Hill," http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/s/2093841_squatters_make_st_georges_hill_their_home (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ "Squatters Make St. George's Hill Their Home," *getSurrey*, June 3, 2011, http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/s/2093841_squatters_make_st_georges_hill_their_home (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011); Ian Bone, "Winstanley Lives—Squatters Back at St. Georges [sic] Hill," <http://ianbone.wordpress.com/2011/05/28/winstanley-lives-squatters-back-on-st-georges-hill/> (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2011).

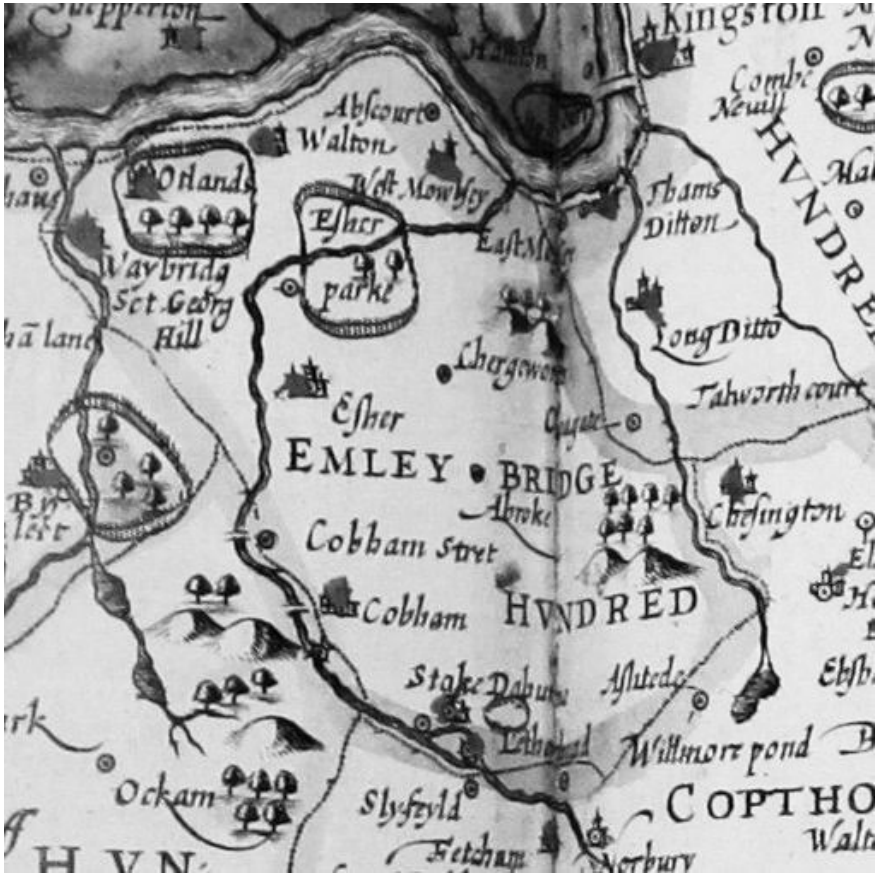


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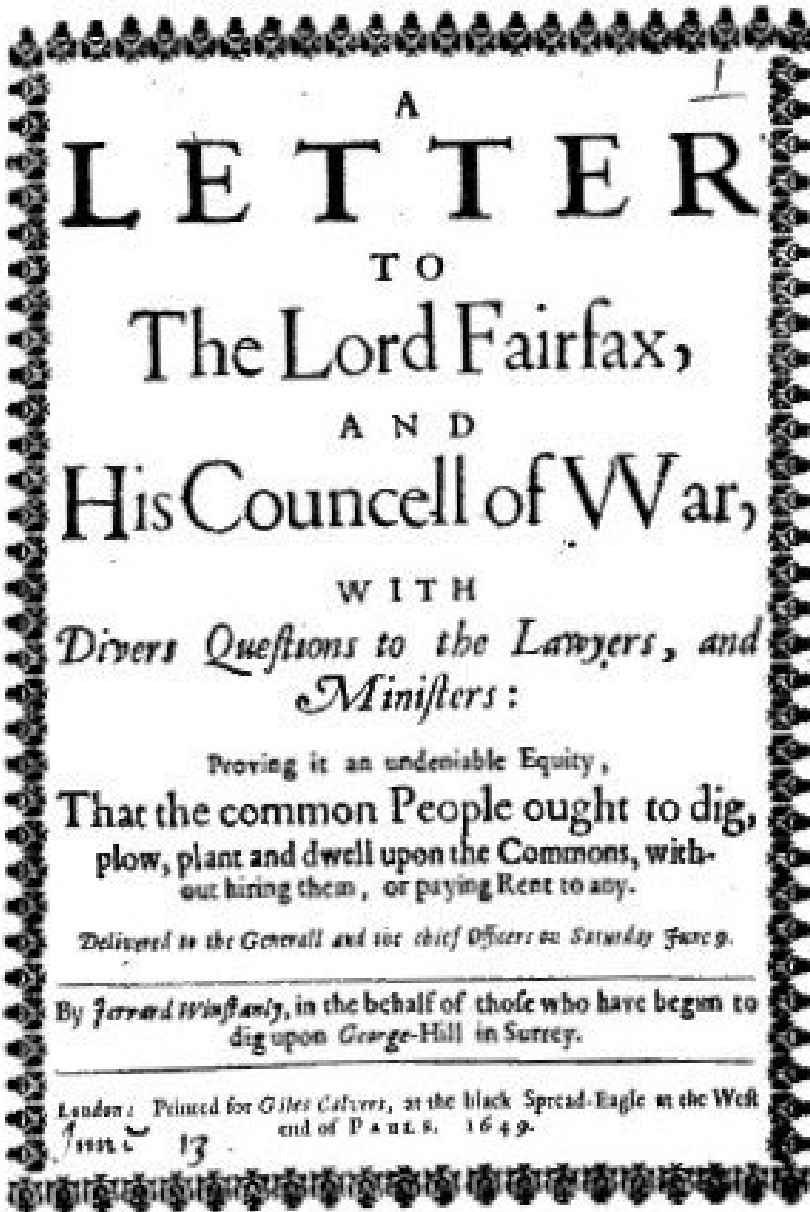


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